

# MEALS ON WHEELS for OLD PEOPLE

*by*

*AMELIA I. HARRIS*

A report of an inquiry by  
The Government Social Survey

Published by The National Corporation for the Care of Old People  
Nuffield Lodge, Regent's Park, London N.W. 1

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## FOREWORD

"Meals on wheels" has, except in a few places, been a service which has been provided for old people by voluntary organisations with some financial help from local authorities. It is the normal pattern of social provision that successful voluntary services are eventually included by the State in those services for which, in one form or another, it assumes responsibility.

It seemed to the Governors of The National Corporation for the Care of Old People that the meals on wheels service was likely to become a local authority responsibility in the not too distant future, and in order to have available as much information as possible about the existing position, they agreed to finance a survey to cover all known schemes in England, Scotland and Wales. The survey was carried out for the Corporation by the Government Social Survey under the direction of Miss A. Harris who also wrote the final report. The necessary sponsorship for this work to be done by a Government Department was given by the Ministry of Health.

The value of any service of this kind is that it should be available to all who need it and the Governors sincerely hope that it will eventually be possible for a truly comprehensive meals service to be provided for old people. As this report makes clear, many different voluntary committees have shown the way, but probably they themselves would be among the first to say that there is still not enough done. The scale on which this service should be provided to meet all needs is beyond the scope of voluntary finances and their resources of manpower: and it is clear that the time has come when local authorities, in spite of the ever increasing demands on them, should become responsible for this important service. It seems possible, indeed, that such action on their part might help to keep down the demand on their other services.

The Governors wish to take this opportunity of thanking all those national and local committees who cooperated so freely by supplying details of their schemes, the many old people in the samples who gave their views on the points put to them, officers of the Ministry of Health and of the Department of Health for Scotland, and last but not least all those in the Government Social Survey whose patient and painstaking work has resulted in a collection of facts some of which may have been believed to exist but none of which, it is safe to say, have previously been supported with so much evidence.

G.C. Gibbs,

Chairman, The National  
Corporation for The Care of  
Old People.

October 1960.







# MEALS DELIVERED TO OLD PEOPLE AT HOME

## "MEALS-ON-WHEELS" SERVICES

### I N T R O D U C T I O N

The 1951 Census of Population showed that there were 48.8 million people in Gt. Britain of whom 5.3 million (nearly 11%) were 65 and over. This confirms the rapid growth in the proportion of elderly people in the population, and this trend is likely to continue. Table I shows the estimated increases from 1954-1964-1979.

T A B L E I

Estimated populations of Gt. Britain 1954-1964-1979.\*

Age Group	1 9 5 4		1 9 6 4		1 9 7 9	
	No. (millions)	%	No. (millions)	%	No. (millions)	%
0-14	11.16	22	10.73	21	10.51	20
15-44	20.76	42	20.97	41	20.98	40
45-64	12.18	25	12.97	26	12.70	25
65 and over	5.53	11	6.19	12	8.04	15
All ages	49.63	100	50.86	100	52.23	100

\*Summary, Table 8, Appendix II (Government Actuary) of Report of the Committee on the Economic & Financial Problems of the Provision for Old Age. (HMSO, December 1954)

It is generally accepted that old people are loath to leave their own home to go to live in an institution, and it is Government policy "to keep the elderly in their own homes as long as possible, and when they have to go to hospital to rehabilitate them wherever possible so that they can live at home again, helped by home nursing and the other domiciliary services". (Minister of Health, House of Commons 30th July 1958 - Hansard Vol. 592, c.s. 1404-5).

The Governors of The National Corporation for the Care of Old People have for some years been increasingly interested in the domiciliary services provided for old people, one such service being the delivery of cooked meals to old people in their own homes, popularly known as the "Meals-on-Wheels" service. This service is, at present, almost entirely provided by voluntary organisations, for while, under the 1948 National Assistance Act, Section 31, Local Authorities are permitted to make contributions to the funds of any voluntary organisation whose activities assist in, or include, the provision of meals to old people, they are not empowered to provide such a service themselves. Although the Corporation is in close touch with voluntary organisations providing services for old people, there was insufficient factual information available about the scope and effectiveness of the "Meals-on-Wheels" service, and the Governors commissioned the Government Social Survey to carry out an investigation into the working of the scheme.



This investigation was designed to cover

1. The scope of the service; the proportion of old people covered, the number of meals and recipients supplied, the days on which the service operates, etc.
2. How the service operates; the source and content of the meal, equipment used for delivery, and number of people engaged in the service.
3. The characteristics of people receiving, and the reasons for their needing, meals-on-wheels.
4. What contribution the service makes to the nutritional, economic and social needs of the recipients.
5. Whether improvements to the present service were thought to be desirable, and if so, what practical steps could be taken.
6. Whether there was an unsatisfied need, both among present recipients and older people not getting meals-on-wheels, and whether the service could be expanded by the voluntary organisations.
7. The cost of the service, and how this was being met.

To cover these points, it was necessary to obtain information from the people concerned with operating the local schemes, the recipients of meals-on-wheels, and older people not receiving meals-on-wheels. It was decided to ask all the local organisers to complete a questionnaire, and to interview a randomly selected sample of

- a) 853 recipients; and
- b) 1,317 older people (women 60 and over and men 65 and over).

Copies of the recording documents used will be found in Appendix A.

There are 3 national organisations the Women's Voluntary Services (W.V.S.); National Old Peoples Welfare Council (O.P.W.C.) and the British Red Cross, and one Scottish organisation, the Scottish Old Peoples Welfare Committee, who advise on, and encourage, the formation of schemes, although each local scheme is autonomous, and is itself responsible for policy and financial arrangements. These four organisations supplied lists of all schemes being operated by constituent or affiliated bodies, and at the same time asked secretaries and organisers to co-operate in the inquiry. To get minimum information on which to select the random sample of recipients, a preliminary note, asking the number of recipients, number of meals per recipient, and total meals served a week was sent out. As a result of this, it was found that a number of schemes were no longer operating and that some schemes appeared on two lists. The total number of meals-on-wheels schemes known to be operating was 459\*, which included 1 independent scheme, and 5 schemes run direct by local authorities.\*\*

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\* It was later found that Salvation Army operated 13 schemes, but it was not possible, at that late stage, to include them in this survey. The total number of meals served per week by the Salvation Army was 735, and the number of recipients was 273, although it is known that some of these recipients also get meals from other organisations on days this organisation does not operate.

\*\* These local authority schemes are operated under the National Health Service Act, and cater for sick people of all ages, although in fact the great majority of people receiving meals through these schemes are old people.



I ORGANISATION AND SCOPE OF PRESENT "MEALS-ON-WHEELS" SERVICE

T A B L E 2

Organisations responsible for running schemes analysed by Region in England, Wales and Scotland

Organisation responsible	North		N.E.		N.W.		N. Midlands		Midlands		Eastern		Southern		London		S.E.		S.W.		Wales		Scotland		Gt. Britain	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
W.V.S.	18	90	21	88	40	80	33	90	33	94	22	73	28	87	49	61	45	90	15	68	25	92	19	41	348	77
O.P.W.C.*	1	5	2	8	-	-	2	5	1	3	3	10	-	-	18	23	3	6	3	14	1	4	18	39	52	11
W.V.S. & O.P.W.C.	1	5	1	4	6	12	2	5	-	-	3	10	1	3	6	7	-	-	3	14	1	4	8	18	32	7
Red Cross**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	7	3	10	7	9	2	4	1	4	-	-	1	2	16	4
Local Authority	-	-	-	-	4	8	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1
All organisations	20	100	24	100	50	100	37	100	35	100	30	100	32	100	80	100	50	100	22	100	27	100	46	100	453	100

\* Includes one independent scheme

\*\* One joint W.V.S. and Red Cross Scheme.

The main questionnaire to organisations was distributed by post by the Headquarters of the voluntary organisations, the completed questionnaire being returned direct to the Social Survey. A special abridged questionnaire was prepared for Local Authorities, and sent direct by the Social Survey. 453 organisers returned completed questionnaires.

The design of the two random samples, and the response rates, are given in Appendix B.

The W.V.S. are responsible for over three quarters of the schemes, and have the virtual monopoly in Wales and the Northern half of England. In Scotland however, the responsibility is evenly shared with the Old Peoples Welfare Committees, except for one Red Cross scheme in the Isle of Bute, this being the only Red Cross scheme north of Norwich. Four of the five Local Authority schemes are in the North Western region.

#### Help by other voluntary organisations

Members of these and other voluntary bodies help in the running of a number of schemes even though they are not themselves responsible for organising them. Other voluntary bodies helping include Rotarians, Inner Wheel, Townswomen's Guilds, Round Tablers, Salvation Army and the St. John's Ambulance Brigade. In some cases more than one voluntary organisation help in the same scheme. The record for co-operation is held by one scheme serving 113 meals a week, with help from 5 outside bodies.

Apart from Local Authority schemes, of which there are only five in number, the distribution of recipients between organisations is very similar to the proportion of schemes for which they are responsible, as will be seen from Table 3.

T A B L E 3

Number of schemes for which organisations are responsible,  
and number of people served

Organisations responsible	Schemes		Recipients	
	No.	%	No.	%
W.V.S.	348	77	15,824	76
O.P.W.C.	52	11	2,285	11
Red Cross	32	7	588	3
W.V.S. + O.P.W.C.	16	4	1,361	7
L.A.	5	1	537	3
All organisations	453	100	20,595	100

#### Size of schemes

The number of recipients per scheme varies considerably, the 2 smallest schemes each catering for 3 people, while the largest caters for 336 people. Table 4 shows the distribution of recipients served by organisations responsible.



T A B L E 4

Number of recipients per scheme and organisation responsible

No. of people served	WVS		OPWC		Red Cross		WVS & OPWC		L.A.		All schemes	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under 10	13	4	4	8	1	6	4	13	-	-	22	5
10 - 19	76	22	9	17	5	31	4	13	-	-	94	21
20 - 29	78	22	9	17	2	13	8	24	-	-	97	21
30 - 39	50	14	10	19	3	19	4	13	-	-	67	15
40 - 59	54	16	11	21	3	19	5	16	-	-	73	16
60 - 79	32	9	2	4	-	-	3	9	2	40	39	9
80 - 99	17	5	1	2	1	6	2	6	1	20	22	5
100 - 149	17	5	4	8	1	6	1	3	1	20	24	5
150 & over	11	3	2	4	-	-	1	3	1	20	15	3
Total	348	100	52	100	16	100	32	100	5	100	453	100

If we regard schemes with under 30 recipients as small, 30-59 as medium, and 60 as large, Table 5 will show that the difference for Red Cross is due to a tendency to a high proportion of small, and a low proportion of large schemes, while the joint W.V.S. and O.P.W.C. difference is the high proportion of small and low proportion of medium schemes. There is however no evidence that the size of schemes is influenced by the type of organisation responsible.

T A B L E 5

Organisations responsible for small, medium and large schemes

S c h e m e	Organisation responsible					
	W.V.S.		OPWC		Red Cross	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Small (under 30 recipients)	167	48	22	42	8	50
Medium (30-59 " )	104	30	21	40	6	38
Large (60 & over " )	77	22	9	18	2	12
All Sizes	348	100	52	100	16	100

There are, however, differences between the size of schemes over the 10 regions of England and Wales, and Scotland, as will be seen from Table 6.

T A B L E 6

Proportion of small, medium and large schemes in regions of England, Wales and Scotland

Size of scheme	Region North No. %	N.E. No. %	N.W. No. %	N.Mid. No. %	Midlands No. %	Eastern No. %	Southern No. %	London No. %	S.E. No. %	S.W. No. %	Wales No. %	Scotland No. %	All areas No. %
Small	5 25	12 50	19 38	16 44	13 37	14 47	22 69	20 25	26 52	15 68	22 82	29 63	213 47
Medium	7 35	5 21	13 26	13 34	13 38	13 43	7 22	37 46	17 34	1 4	2 7	12 26	140 31
Large	8 40	7 29	18 36	8 22	9 25	3 10	3 9	23 29	7 14	6 28	3 11	5 11	100 22
All schemes	20 100	24 100	50 100	37 100	35 100	30 100	32 100	80 100	50 100	22 100	27 100	46 100	453 100
% No. of schemes	4	5	11	8	8	7	7	18	11	5	6	10	100
% No. of recipients	5	7	14	8	9	5	5	21	8	5	4	9	100



4 out of 5 schemes in Wales, and roughly 2 out of every 3 schemes in Southern and S.W. England and in Scotland, have less than 30 recipients, compared with only one in four in London and the Northern region.

The Northern region has almost twice as many large schemes as the average, and South and Eastern England, Wales and Scotland have the smallest proportion of large schemes.

Number of days operating

Meals services do not operate 7 days a week, neither is there any standard number of meals which may be given. During the survey week (June 23-29th, 1958) 18 (4%) of the 453 schemes had already closed down for the summer break. All the local authority schemes were operating, but the distribution of closed schemes was proportionately the same for all organisations. Table 7 shows the number of days each organisation operates.

T A B L E 7

Number of days schemes operate, analysed by organisation responsible

Number of days operating	Organisation responsible								All schemes			
	W.V.S.		OPWC		Red Cross		W.V.S. & OPWC				LA	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	80	24	2	4	4	27	2	6	-	-	88	20
2	139	42	16	32	7	46	13	43	-	-	175	40
3	49	15	10	20	1	7	5	16	1	20	66	15
4	41	12	12	24	-	-	6	19	1	20	60	14
5 or more	25	7	10	20	3	20	5	16	3	60	46	11
All schemes operating survey week	334	100	50	100	15	100	31	100	5	100	435	100

One in every 5 schemes operates on 1 day a week only, and two in every 5 operate 2 days a week. Only one quarter of the schemes supply meals on 4 or more days a week. Schemes for which Old Peoples Welfare Committees are wholly or partially responsible have a higher proportion of schemes operating on more days than the W.V.S. or Red Cross.

There is also a considerable difference in the number of days schemes operate when taken by region, as shown in Table 8. overleaf.

It is interesting to note that in Scotland, where the schemes serve less people, the schemes operate on more days, but there is no positive correlation between small schemes and greater number of days. In Wales half the schemes operate one day a week only, and only one scheme operates on more than 3 days.

Number of meals per recipient

The number of days a scheme operates, while controlling the maximum number of meals that can be given to any recipient, does not necessarily control the minimum number of meals. A scheme operating on 1 day can only serve a recipient with one meal a week, although a few do take 2 meals along so the

T A B L E 8

Distribution of number of days schemes operate within regions of England, Wales and Scotland

Number of days operating	N.		N.E.		N.W.		N.Mid.		Midlands		Eastern		Southern		London		S.E.		S.W.		Wales		Scotland		All schemes	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	4	22	10	45	3	6	15	42	10	29	10	36	4	13	4	5	9	18	5	23	10	50	4	9	88	20
2	6	33	5	23	15	31	8	22	16	45	12	42	21	68	24	30	33	68	10	45	7	35	18	39	175	40
3	3	17	3	14	10	20	9	25	5	14	5	18	2	6	12	15	1	2	3	14	2	10	11	24	66	15
4	4	22	2	9	13	27	3	8	3	9	1	4	3	10	21	27	3	6	2	9	-	-	5	11	60	14
5 or more	1	6	2	9	8	16	1	3	1	3	-	-	1	3	18	23	3	6	2	9	1	5	8	17	46	11
All schemes operating in survey period	18	100	22	100	49	100	36	100	35	100	28	100	31	100	79	100	49	100	22	100	20	100	46	100	435	100



recipient can save one for the next day. On the other hand, a scheme operating on 5 days, serving 200 meals a week, may give 200 people one meal, or 100 people 2 meals, or 40 people 5 meals.

There would appear to be a number of different factors taken into consideration in deciding the number of meals to allocate to any one recipient. These are as follows:-

1. Number of days on which service can operate.
2. Number of people known to require meals.
3. Number of meals each person needs.
4. Number of meals each person will take.
5. Ability to supply the right sort of meal.
6. Attitude of the local organiser towards the value of the meal itself as distinct from the value of the social contact in delivering the meal.

The number of meals given to recipients by various organisations in the survey week is given in Table 9.

T A B L E 9

Number of meals per recipient in the survey week,  
analysed by organisation responsible

Number of meals per week per recipient	Number of recipients in schemes organised by						All Schemes					
	W.V.S.		OPWC		Red Cross				OPWC + W.V.S.		L.A.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0	566		91		3		62		-		722	-
1	7172	46	485	22	119	20	161	12	-	-	7937	40
2	6059	40	891	40	256	44	863	67	229	43	8298	42
3	909	6	266	12	77	13	185	14	194	36	1631	8
4	854	6	256	12	33	6	41	3	17	3	1201	6
5	237	2	260	12	99	17	26	2	97	18	719	4
6	26	-	16	1	1	-	23	2	-	-	66	-
7	1	-	20	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	21	-
All recipients except those having no meals survey week	15258	100	2194	100	585	100	1299	100	537	100	19873	100

722 people who normally have meals delivered had none during the survey week. Most of these are in schemes which have closed, some are individuals who were away on holiday, or out for the day where only one meal was delivered.

A very high proportion of recipients (40%) get one meal a week only and it is obvious that the W.V.S. contribute very greatly to this proportion. The schemes for which W.V.S. have sole responsibility serve almost half their recipients with one meal (46%), as against 17% for schemes where they have only part or no responsibility. 2 in every hundred recipients get 5 meals a week in W.V.S. schemes, compared with 17 per hundred for Red Cross and 18 per hundred for Local Authorities.

Only 21 people get a meal every day, and 66 on 6 days a week.

The distribution of meals per person for regions in England, Wales and Scotland is given in Table 10.

T A B L E 10

Number of meals per recipient in the survey week  
analysed by regions of England, Wales and Scotland

Number of meals per recipient	N. No. %	N.E. No. %	N.W. No. %	N.Mid. No. %	Midlands No. %	Eastern No. %	Southern No. %	London No. %	S.E. No. %	S.W. No. %	Wales No. %	Scotland No. %	All schemes No. %
0	210 -	45 -	49 -	49 -	16 -	56 -	2 -	60 -	71 -	5 -	152 -	7 -	722 -
1	574 56	1254 92	1250 45	1323 79	1291 69	590 59	77 8	383 9	296 16	248 26	528 80	123 7	7937 40
2	403 39	99 7	1060 39	263 16	440 23	301 30	727 79	1906 45	1408 77	489 51	134 20	1068 66	8298 42
3	36 4	- -	356 13	89 5	44 2	75 8	83 9	491 12	36 2	189 20	2 -	230 14	1631 8
4	9 1	2 -	53 2	4 -	14 1	26 3	31 3	958 23	23 1	16 2	- -	65 4	1201 6
5	- -	- -	21 1	- -	97 5	- -	10 1	404 10	47 3	5 1	- -	135 8	719 4
6	- -	3 -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	26 1	14 1	- -	- -	23 1	66 -
7	- -	19 1	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	1 -	1 -	- -	- -	21 -
All recipients getting meals in survey week	1022 100	1377 100	2740 100	1679 100	1886 100	992 100	928 100	4168 100	1825 100	948 100	664 100	1644 100	19873 100
Average number meals per recipient	1.49	1.17	1.74	1.27	1.51	1.53	2.11	2.80	1.99	1.99	1.21	2.45	1.93



This shows very high differences between areas in the number of recipients getting one meal. In the N.E. region 92%, and in Wales 80%, of all recipients get 1 meal a week only, compared with 7% in Scotland, 8% in Southern region and 9% in London.

The organisations' attitudes towards giving present recipients more, or taking on new people, if they could supply twice as many meals, might give us some indication of whether they regard the need for food as greater than + the need for social contact. 8 schemes did not answer, 2 could not serve more meals so begged the question. How the organisers for the rest of the 398 schemes serving 3 or less meals to most of their recipients think they would allocate extra meals is shown in Table 11.

T A B L E 11

Way in which meals would be allocated (if they could double number served) by most usual number of meals served

Allocation of extra meals if twice as many could be served (Organiser's opinion)	Most usual number of meals served							
	1		2		3		All schemes 3 or less	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Give present recipients more	80	48	72	36	10	29	162	41
Take on new recipients	57	35	88	44	18	51	163	41
Give some more, and take some on	24	15	29	15	3	9	56	14
No need for either	4	2	9	5	4	11	17	4
All organisers giving an opinion	165	100	198	100	35	100	398	100

4% of organisers felt there was no need either to give present recipients more meals or to take on new recipients. Of the schemes where most people get one meal only one-half of the schemes would concentrate all the extra meals on their present recipients, while 24 (15%) would give only some of their recipients more. Thus, we can estimate roughly the number of meals considered by organisers to be sufficient for most recipients in Table 12 below:

T A B L E 12

Number of meals regarded as satisfactory by voluntary organisers

Number of meals per week	Schemes	
	No.	%
1	78	17
2	200	45
3	37	8
4 or more	133	30
All schemes (excluding loc.auth.)	448	100

The number of meals a recipient gets would appear to depend on the attitude of the individual organisers, rather than any central policy of the organisations concerned.

Closure of schemes for part of the year

Not all schemes operate throughout the year. Of the 453 schemes, 162 close completely for part of the year. One scheme serves less meals to recipients in school holidays and Wakes fortnight, but operates throughout the year. 2 schemes closed for 6 and 7 months of the year, the others for periods ranging from 1 week (8 schemes) to 19 weeks (8 schemes). In calculating the closure of schemes, the fact that they do not operate on Bank Holidays has been ignored, unless they only serve one meal a week on Monday, when this is counted as 1 week's meals not served, or operate only on Friday in the case of Good Friday. Schemes do not operate on Xmas Day, but in some cases the organisers have pointed out they ensure the recipients do not go without, making arrangements for food parcels, etc. to be given. The number of weeks closed is given in Table 13.

T A B L E 13

Number of weeks schemes of various organisations close during the year

Number of weeks closed	O r g a n i s a t i o n						All schemes					
	W.V.S.		OPWC		Red Cross			W.V.S. & OPWC		L.A.		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
*Not closed	211	61	41	79	14	88	21	66	4	80	291	64
Closed 1-4 weeks	43	12	2	4			5	16	1	20	51	12
" 5-8 weeks	54	16	2	4	1	6	4	12			61	13
" 9-12 weeks	12	3	1	2							13	3
" 13 weeks or more	28	8	6	11	1	6	2	6			37	8
Total schemes	348	100	52	100	16	100	32	100	5	100	453	100

\*Includes 1 scheme which partially closes, e.g. stops serving some people but makes arrangements for others.

One-third of the schemes close down for part of the year, and 8% of all schemes are closed for more than 3 months. Red Cross and L.A. schemes keep going the longest, while W.V.S. have a higher proportion closing for 1-8 weeks.

Table 14 shows the number of weeks schemes stop in the regions of England, Wales and Scotland.

London has an outstandingly high proportion of schemes (95%) which keep open all the year round. In the N.W., nearly three-quarters keep open all the year, while those that close do so only for a short period, thus being slightly more active than the S.W., where though three-quarters operate constantly, the rest close down for longer periods.

The areas where most schemes close are Wales, where about one third only operate throughout the year, and one third close for 3 months or more, and N. England, where about one third operate fully, and one quarter close for 3 months or more.



T A B L E 14

Number of weeks schemes close, analysed by Region of England, Wales and Scotland

Number of weeks closed	N.		N.E.		N.W.		N.Mid.		Midlands		Eastern		Southern		London		S.E.		S.W.		Wales		Scotland		All schemes	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Not closed	7	35	13	54	36	72	18	49	16	47	16	53	22	69	76	95	34	68	17	76	10	37	26	58	291	64
Closed 1-4 weeks	1	5	2	8	14	28	8	22	4	11	3	10	2	6	2	3	2	4	3	14	2	7	8	17	51	12
" 5-8 weeks	6	30	3	13			6	16	11	31	8	27	3	9	1	1	11	22	1	5	3	11	8	17	61	13
" 9-12 weeks	1	5					2	5			1	3	4	13			2	4			1	4	2	4	13	3
" 13 weeks or more	5	25	6	25			3	8	4	11	2	7	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	5	11	41	2	4	37	8
All schemes	20	100	24	100	50	100	37	100	35	100	30	100	32	100	80	100	50	100	22	100	27	100	46	100	453	100

The number of people served by the schemes makes no difference to whether they stop or not, nor does it affect the length of time closed. Table 15 shows the periods for which recipients get no meals-on-wheels.

T A B L E 15

Number of recipients not getting meals-on-wheels for various periods due to closure of schemes

Closure of schemes	Recipients	
	No.	%
Not stopped	13,372	65
Stopped 1-4 weeks	2,630	13
" 5-8 weeks	2,864	14
" 9-12 weeks	486	2
" 13 weeks or more	1,243	6
All schemes	20,595	100

Over 7,000 people do not get meals all the year round, and 1,243 are without meals, from this service for 3 months of the year.

Of the 162 schemes which close, 161 close during the summer. The two main reasons given by organisers for closing are:-

No supply of meals	72 schemes
Helpers on holiday, etc.	77 schemes
Both above	7 schemes

In one case the scheme closed to eke out the grant, and the summer was chosen as the best time for this, and in 4 cases it was because the need for meals in summer was less acute, one organiser stating it was the fruiting season, and older people were taken away to look after grandchildren while the parents worked. Of the 77 schemes which closed because of personnel difficulties, or to give voluntary workers a holiday, 5 organisers said there was a smaller need for meals, and one said it also made recipients more appreciative when they got meals again!

45 schemes closed during the Xmas, Easter and Whitsun holiday periods, and here the main reason was the supply of meals (35 schemes), personnel difficulties affecting 8 schemes, and 2 closing over Christmas because there is so much other help given to old people at this time.

One scheme in a district where there is a famous race-course closes the week of the classic race, as they are not allowed on the roads due to traffic control points and police orders.

Where there was difficulty in getting the meals, the main source of supply was the School Meals Service, which only operates in school terms, which accounts for the large number of schemes stopping at Easter, Whitsun and Xmas as well as the summer. For short closing periods in the summer only, the meals generally come from factory canteens.



Table 16 shows the way in which the meal is obtained.

T A B L E 16

Source of supply of meal and whether the scheme closes

Source of supply	Not closed		Closed 1 - 4 weeks		Closed 5 weeks or more		All schemes	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Cooked by members	68	60	12	11	33	29	113	100
School Meals Service - only source	16	26	3	5	42	69	61	100
School Meals Service - alternative source	15	52	5	17	9	31	29	100
Town Hall/Civic rest:	41	85	1	2	6	13	48	100
Industrial canteen	60	68	25	28	4	4	89	100
Cafe/restaurant	71	79	3	3	16	18	90	100
Old Persons Home	8	100	-	-	-	-	8	100
Other sources	12	80	2	13	1	7	15	100
All sources	291	64	51	11	111	25	453	100

Of the 90 schemes which usually get the meals through the School Meals Service, 29 have another source for school holidays, thus reducing the number of schemes closed for longer periods. Nevertheless, 51 out of the 90 (56%) schemes using the School Meals Service as their main source of supply close for more than 5 weeks every year. Apart from the very few schemes which get their meals from Old Peoples Homes, the most regular supply would appear to be from factory canteens, 95% of which serve continuously or with a very short break.

Shortage of volunteers is the reason for the 29 schemes which cook their own meals closing for 5 weeks or more.

Variation in demand

Organisers were asked if they thought there was less need for meals in summer than in winter, and of the 436 answering 269 (62%) said the need was just as great, although 4 thought lighter diets were wanted, which they were unable to supply. This applied equally to schemes serving urban and rural areas. The reasons given by the 167 organisers thinking there was less need are in Table 17 overleaf, some organisers giving more than one reason.

T A B L E 17

Organisers' reasons for thinking there is less need for meals in summer than in winter

Reason for reduced demand	Number of schemes	% of <u>all</u> schemes answering (436)
Less illness, recipients able to go out more, etc.	92	21
Older people away/on holiday	77	18
Lighter diets satisfy, and recipients more able to get light meals	29	7
Recipients' families come to stay	25	6
Get free/grow own garden produce and make do with these	18	4

It was interesting to note that those areas where families came to stay with old people were almost all seaside or holiday resorts.

In most cases those thinking there was less demand were organisers of schemes which closed for some period in the summer. While there are undoubtedly some individuals who do need meals less in summer, it is unlikely to apply to all recipients in any one scheme.

There is another reason for stopping meals while there is still a need, and this is that most organisations are not able to supply special meals where there are dietary problems. 75 schemes do supply special diets, to a total of 303 people. 126 schemes have had to refuse to supply people, or stopped supplying them, because they could not make suitable arrangements. In 43 schemes no record of numbers had been kept, but 208 people had their meals stopped or were refused supplies, because the meal was unsuitable, by the 79 schemes where numbers were known.

This is unlikely to be anywhere near the total need for special diets; recipients are recommended for inclusion in the lists by bodies or individuals who know the limitations of supply, and do not, therefore, put forward the names of individuals needing special diets.



## II WHY AND TO WHOM MEALS-ON-WHEELS ARE SUPPLIED

Organisations supply meals to old people who cannot obtain cooked meals regularly, irrespective of the income level. There are a number of reasons for their needing such a service.

1. Bedfast for all or the major part of the year.
2. Housebound, and prevented from cooking by some physical disability.
3. Housebound, could cook for themselves, but cannot do shopping.
4. Can get out, but can't cook because of some physical disability, such as blindness, paralysis of arms, etc.

In addition to any one of the above, they need to be living alone, or in a household where there is no-one else able or willing to supply a regular cooked meal, and no relatives, friends, neighbours or paid help who can be relied on to see that regular meals are supplied.

The need can be permanent, or temporary; the older person may have broken an arm, or have been in hospital, and want meals-on-wheels to help them over this period. Or a daughter who normally does the cooking is ill, or away, and meals are needed for a short time only.

### Who discovers the old people 'in need of meals'

In theory, organisers do not themselves find the people who may need the service, but accept recommendations from responsible bodies such as Local Authority health and welfare departments, doctors, etc., and then check that the social conditions warrant delivery. The level of income is not an obstacle to receiving meals, but may be taken into account when assessing the charge. Where possible, the investigation takes place before meals are delivered, but if the recommender says the case is urgent, meals are delivered first, and investigated by the organisation later. Of the 20,000 recipients who are supplied by voluntary organisations, records were available to show who was the recommending authority in 12,980 cases, as shown in Table 18.

T A B L E 18

Number of present recipients recommended by authorities analysed by organisation responsible

Who recommended	O r g a n i s a t i o n						All voluntary organisations No.      %
	W.V.S. No.      %	O.P.W.C. No.      %	Red Cross No.      %	W.V.S./O.P.W.C. No.      %			
Hospital Almoner	785      8	175      13	36      12	104      10	1,100	8	
National Assistance Board	480      5	32      2	8      3	17      2	537	4	
L.A. Health Department	2,057      19	180      14	88      30	255      23	2,580	21	
L.A. Welfare Department	2,519      24	300      22	25      9	315      30	3,159	24	
Home Help	1,027      10	145      11	45      16	101      10	1,318	10	
Doctors	1,290      13	187      14	9      3	103      10	1,589	12	
Blind Society	278      3	27      2	2      1	12      1	319	2	
Clergy	219      2	22      2	1      -	18      2	260	2	
Friends/Relations	1,105      11	75      6	23      8	61      6	1,264	10	
Others	549      5	189      14	52      18	64      6	854	7	
All recommending bodies	10,309      100	1,332      100	289      100	1,050      100	12,980	100	



The largest single recommending authority is the L.A. Health Department, which introduces 21% of the recipients. The Red Cross get a higher percentage of recipients from this source. There is no significant difference in the distribution of organisations as regards the recommending body. A surprisingly high percentage (10%) were "recommended" by friends and relations, since most organisers state that the recommendation must originate from a responsible authority, but these cases are, we are assured, generally passed through to a recognised authority to check the need before being put on the books.

This is somewhat confusing, because 46% of the organisers say they do not accept recommendations from any authority without themselves checking the need. Others will accept some authorities, but investigate others.

Generally, only half the recommendations from doctors, health departments or hospital almoners are checked by organisers for need, about one-third from the welfare departments and home helps, one-quarter from the National Assistance Board, and Blind Society, and one-tenth from the clergy.

#### Review of continuing need

In 64 (14%) schemes, once a recommendation is accepted meals are supplied until the recipients say they don't want them any more, or they move away, or die, although 1 scheme reviews the list if it gets full. In 252 (56%) no special investigation is made, but the helpers delivering are told - "observe as you serve". 92 schemes (21%) have a special visit made by a member (usually the organiser), who checks that the meal is still needed, while 40 (9%) have the cases investigated by the local welfare or health authorities regularly. In 70% of schemes no special investigation of continuing need is carried out.

As a result of the servers' reports, and special investigations, 599 people were removed from the lists in the 6 months preceding the survey. If we consider the method of reviewing lists with the proportion of schemes which actually stop supplying as a result of the review, we find that where the schemes rely on servers' reports, 28% have stopped supplying at least one recipient, where a special investigation is made by own organisation 49% remove at least one name from the list, and where the health or welfare authorities investigate, 56% find at least one recipient who no longer needs the service. Accepting the standards for need applied by these authorities, there is little doubt that some people do go on receiving meals after they no longer need them. If we apply to the total number of recipients the proportion of elimination made by the health and welfare authorities on the section they inspect, we can estimate that the total number which should have been removed would be in the region of 1,500 i.e. there should be a 7% "turnover" every 6 months. There is, however, a further point to be borne in mind here. The recipients are elderly people and while the immediate need for meals no longer applies, there might in some cases be a strong argument to continue supplying to prevent a more serious breakdown in health later. For example, an elderly woman who gets meals because of a broken arm would no longer be eligible once the arm is mended, but the effort of having to return to cooking every single day may have an effect on her general health.

#### The people who benefit from the service

We have seen from Table 18 that most of the recommendations come from bodies which are concerned with all age-groups, and it is inevitable that they should ask for meals to be supplied to younger people who are temporarily or permanently disabled.

The organisers state that 341 people among the present recipients (1.7%) are under pensionable age(women under 60, men under 65). Local Authorities have a higher proportion of "young" recipients, since they regard the main criteria for getting a meal to be health, not age. As many of the records are incomplete, this would appear to be an under-estimate, since in our sample\* of 853 recipients, we found 24 women under 60 and 15 men under 65, (4.6%). The youngest recipient was 32 years old\*\*and the oldest 97. Nearly 40% of recipients are 80 and over. The age and sex distribution of recipients is given in Table 19:-

T A B L E 19

Sex and Age distribution of recipients

Age group	Male		Female		All recipients	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under 60	5	1.8	24	4.2	29	3.4
60-64	10	3.6	23	4.0	33	3.9
65-69	21	7.5	50	8.8	71	8.4
70-74	61	21.7	121	21.3	182	21.4
75-79	70	24.8	138	24.4	208	24.5
80-84	66	23.5	145	25.5	211	24.9
85-89	39	13.9	48	8.5	87	10.2
90 and over	9	3.2	19	3.3	28	3.3
All ages	281*	100.0	568*	100.0	849*	100.0

\* 1 man and 3 women refused to give age.

There are twice as many women getting meals as men. A comparison of the proportion of "elderly" (i.e. 65 and over) men and women among the recipients with the proportion in these age-groups taken from the 1951 Census figures is given in Table 20.

T A B L E 20

Comparison of proportion of elderly males and females in the population (Census 1951) with recipients

	Men aged 65 & over		Women aged 65 & over	
	No.	%	No.	%
Census 1951	2,174,800	41	3,135,200	59
Recipients' sample	266	34	521	66

\* See Appendix B.

\*\* A permanently crippled man, given one meal a week to relieve mother, aged 68.



It will be seen that a proportionately higher number of elderly women receive meals-on-wheels. Although the numbers in the sample are too small to show a trend by 5-year age-groups, there is a tendency for the proportions of men and women recipients 80 and over to be similar to the proportions in the general population.

Mobility of recipients

Recipients were asked whether they could get as far as the shops in winter, except when the weather was very bad. The results are given in Table 21.

T A B L E 21

Mobility of male and female recipients in winter  
(recipients' statements)

M o b i l i t y	Male		Female		All recipients	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Able to get to shops	190	67	218	38	408	48
Bedfast	5	2	27	5	32	4
Housebound	87	31	326	57	413	48
All recipients	282	100	571	100	853	100

A much higher proportion of women than of men were bedfast and housebound. The reasons for their not being able to get out showed no significant difference between men and women as will be seen from Table 22, except for rheumatoid and arthritic conditions which are more prevalent in women than in men.

T A B L E 22

Reasons given by recipients  
for not being able to get out

Reason for being bedfast or housebound	Males		Females		All bedfast and housebound	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Blind	12	13	48	14	60	13
Crippled	24	26	80	23	104	23
Cardiac condition	13	14	36	10	49	11
Rheumatic condition	14	15	92	26	106	24
Pulmonary condition	8	9	21	6	29	7
Other <sup>r</sup> permanent disability	11	12	42	12	53	12
Old age	8	9	30	8	38	9
Temporary illness	-		2	1	2	1
Misc. conditions	2	2	2		4	
All bedfast and housebound	92	100	353	100	445	100

The 32 recipients who are bedfast (Table 22) obviously cannot get a meal for themselves, and of the 413 who were housebound, 191 said they could not cook a meal. The reasons are given in Table 23.

Housebound but not bedfast who can't cook

T A B L E 23

Reasons given by housebound recipients  
for not being able to cook for themselves

Reasons not able to cook	No.	%
Blind	34	18
Crippled	53	28
Cardiac condition	20	10
Rheumatic condition	46	24
Pulmonary condition	5	3
Other permanent disability	15	8
Old age	18	9
All housebound recipients who say they can't cook	191	100

In addition 47 of the 191 recipients gave subsidiary reasons for not cooking. 29 were nervous lest they might burn or scald themselves. 14 men didn't know how to cook properly, and 4 recipients said that even if they could manage, they had no proper cooking facilities.

Of the 222 who were not debarred from cooking by physical reasons, only 30 (14%) would rather cook, if someone would shop for them, than have meals delivered. Why meals-on-wheels are preferred is given in Table 24.

Housebound but physically able to cook

T A B L E 24

Main reason given by recipients for  
preferring meals-on-wheels to cooking for themselves

Main reason for preferring meals delivered	No.	%
Too tiring to cook each day	96	50
Can't eat it after trouble of cooking	12	6
Don't know how to cook	10	5
No cooking facilities	3	2
Cheap	12	6
Good meal/variety	12	6
"Breaks up the day"	4	2
Difficult to cook for 1	3	2
"Saves trouble"	32	16
Misc: reasons	9	5
Housebound, physically able to cook	192	100

In addition to the 12 having meals mainly because it is cheap, 6 others mentioned this fact, 8 recipients said the delivery made a pleasant break in the day, in addition to the 4 giving this as the main reason.



It looks, therefore, as if there is a real need for delivering meals-on-wheels where people are housebound, even though the recipient can do a certain amount of cooking, since the vast majority could not, or would not, be able to have regular meals.

Recipients who are not housebound or bedfast

The purpose of asking whether the recipients could get down to the shops was not merely to see if shopping difficulties presented the main problem of getting a meal. Obviously, they may be able to go out, but not cook for themselves. The 408 recipients who could get out gave the following reasons for needing a meal delivered.

T A B L E    25

Why men and women who can get to shops need meals-on-wheels

Reason for needing meal	Male		Female		All mobile recipients	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Blind	15	8	7	3	22	5
Permanent physical disability	43	23	106	49	149	38
Not used to cooking	67	35	4	2	71	17
Easier	33	17	45	21	78	19
Temp. illness	9	5	18	8	27	7
No cooking facilities	3	2	5	2	8	2
Cheap	13	7	16	7	29	7
Will not bother to cook	2	1	10	5	12	3
Miscellaneous	4	2	2	1	6	1
Meals not needed	1	-	5	2	6	1
All reasons	190	100	218	100	408	100

In the miscellaneous group, 2 were married to invalids, and had meals with them. One said it ensured getting at least 2 good meals a week, while another hadn't time to cook, because she had to rest, and getting food for her 3 pets (2 cats and 1 dog) was all the cooking she could manage.

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ % of mobile recipients (1% of all recipients) said they didn't really need the meal, while 7% who could get out took the meal because it was cheap. While half the women who could get out needed a meal because of a physical disability, the main reason given by men was that they hadn't been used to cooking (over one third of the men).

A summary of tables 22-25, the reasons for recipients being given meals-on-wheels, is given in Table 26 overleaf.

T A B L E 26

Reasons for all recipients being given meals-on-wheels

Reason for having meals-on-wheels	Housebound/ bedfast	Mobile	All recipients	
	No.	No.	No.	%
Blind	60	22	82	10
Permanent physical disability	341	149	490	58
Temporary illness/incapacity	2	27	29	3
Old Age	38	-	38	4
Not used to cooking	-	71	71	8
Easier	-	78	78	9
No cooking facilities	-	8	8	1
Cheap	-	29	29	3
Will not bother to cook	-	12	12	2
Meals not needed	-	6	6	1
Miscellaneous	4	6	10	1
All reasons	445	408	853	100

Cooking facilities

8 (2%) of the recipients who could go out said that having no cooking facilities was the reason for their need. Of these 1 had only an open fire, 3 had gas rings but no oven, and the other 4 had solid fuel grates. Of the 78 recipients who found it "easier" to have meals-on-wheels than cooking for themselves, 64% had a gas or electric cooker, 28% had a solid fuel grate, while nearly 8% had only a gas ring or oil stove.

When we look, however, at the cooking facilities of the whole sample of recipients (Table 27) we find that a substantial number of recipients have not the equipment to enable them to cook a meal easily.

T A B L E 27

Type of cooking equipment and where situated

Type of equipment	Own kitchen		Kitchen shared with another household		Living room		Hall, passage		All sites	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Gas or electric cooker	566	93	35	94	52	26	5	71	658	77
Solid fuel cooker	19	3	1	3	115	59	-	-	135	16
Gas rings/hot plates only	27	4	1	3	18	9	2	29	48	6
Oil stoves/open fire	-		-		12	6	-		12	1
All types	612	100	37	100	197	100	7	100	853	100

The use of lunch clubs

Delivering ready-cooked meals to people in their own homes is not the most economical way of providing food. It is costly in man-power and transport, and the meal itself cannot be as hot as if it were served on the spot.

It is suggested sometimes on these and other grounds that there is a strong argument for serving meals at, say, an old people's lunch club. There is the additional advantage of social contact. In 87 areas covered by meals-on-wheels schemes there are also lunch clubs. While the 445 recipients in the



sample who were bedfast or housebound could not be catered for in this way, the 408 recipients who could get out were asked if they would prefer to get their dinners, for the same price, at a lunch club which they could get to easily.

58 (14%) of the recipients who were not housebound preferred to go to a club. The proportions were not significantly different for varying age groups or sex.

About one quarter of the recipients did not give specific reasons for not wanting to eat in a club, saying it was easier or more comfortable to get it at home, or that they liked to eat in their own home. 47 (12%) said they couldn't get out in bad weather, and 61 (15%) that they were shy and didn't like mixing or crowds, men being just as shy as women. 22 men and 3 women (6%) preferred not to go since they had a housebound relative who couldn't go with them, and they preferred to eat together. 6 of these men were under 75, while 16 were 75 or over. 22% would not use clubs because of some physical disability, (including blindness).

#### Could other people supply a meal?

It will be remembered that meals-on-wheels are only supplied where there is no-one else in the household, or no neighbour, friend or relative outside the household, who is prepared to supply them. Table 28 shows the marital status of the recipients.

T A B L E 28

Marital status of male and female recipients

Marital status	Male		Female		All recipients	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Single	37	13	122	21	159	19
Married	75	27	71	12	146	17
Widowed/separated/divorced	170	60	378	67	548	64
All recipients	282	100	571	100	853	100

27% of the men getting meals are married, compared with 12% of women recipients who are married.

Over 80% of the recipients are either single, widowed, separated or divorced.

Table 29 overleaf shows the types of household in which the recipients live.

T A B L E 29

## Other members of the household

Type of household	No.	%
Living alone	608	72
With husband/wife only	122	14
Household contains		
Daughter not working	6	1
Other females not working	27	3
Other females not working and spouse	2	-
Working females	26	3
Working females + spouse	3	-
Males only	49	6
Males only + spouse	10	1
All households	853	100

72% of all recipients live alone, and another 14% with husband or wife only. 4% of the households in which recipients live have a non-working female, and 4% have at least one woman, but no women who are not working. 7% have no women other than the recipient or spouse. Taking separately male and female recipients not living with a spouse, there is no difference in the type of households, and the figures have not been reproduced here.

It would appear that the majority of recipients could not expect other members of the household to supply a cooked meal.

Sons or daughters not living with recipients

Table 30 shows the number of recipients who have sons and daughters not living with them. Four adopted and foster children have been included in the table where the recipient regards them in the same way as blood relatives.

T A B L E 30

Number of recipients with  
sons or daughters not living with them

Children not living with recipient	No.	%
Single	159	19
No children	231	27
1 child	140	16
2 children	123	14
3 children	77	9
4 children	56	7
5 children	32	4
6 or more children	35	4
All recipients	853	100



Nearly a half of recipients have no sons or daughters living with them. There were 1,233 children living apart from parents, of whom 641 (52%) were sons and 592 (48%) daughters. Table 31 shows how long the parent estimates it would take children to come to visit.

T A B L E    31

How long it would take  
children to visit parents (home to home)

Length of time to visit parents from home	Sons		Daughters		All children	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Up to 15 minutes	198	31	165	28	363	30
15 minutes - 1 hour	205	32	195	32	400	32
Over 1 hour	172	27	181	31	353	29
Living abroad	45	7	33	6	78	6
Don't know/no answer	21	3	18	3	39	3
All children	641	100	592	100	1233	100

Sons and daughters of recipients seem to live about the same distance away, but it might be expected that daughters are more likely to be able to supply meals than sons.

In order to supply meals, children would have to live fairly near to the parents, and it is reasonable to suppose that living more than 15 minutes away would preclude visiting for the purpose of taking a pre-cooked meal, or going to prepare a meal at the recipient's home. Again, sons are less likely to be able to help, since most of them are working. Table 32 shows how many recipients have at least one daughter, or failing a daughter, at least one son, living less than 15 minutes away.

T A B L E    32

Daughters and/or sons living  
within 15 minutes from recipients

living up to 15 minutes away	Number of children not in household										All recip- ients			
	None		One		Two		Three		Four				Five or more	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
At least one daughter	-	-	16	11	23	19	31	40	29	52	33	49	132	15
No daughters, but son/s	-	-	28	20	26	21	19	25	4	7	16	24	93	11
No daughters or sons	390	100	96	69	74	60	27	35	23	41	18	27	628	74
All recipients	390	100	140	100	123	100	77	100	56	100	67	100	853	100

85% of the recipients could not, therefore, be expected to receive regular provision of meals from daughters outside the household. Even in the 15% of cases where recipients do have a daughter living close by, it must be remembered that many are married with families of their own, or working.

It would seem therefore that by-and-large the people receiving meals-on-wheels cannot get meals themselves, or rely on anyone outside the household to provide meals regularly.

### III SUITABILITY OF MEALS

#### Source of meal

Meals provided come from varying sources. They may be obtained ready cooked from an official or private source, or the members may cook the meal. Where the source from which a meal is usually obtained is not available for some part of the year, the scheme either closes completely or makes some alternative arrangement. In 1 scheme serving 60 meals a day, 24 are obtained from the School Meals Service, while 36 are obtained from 2 different industrial canteens. In another case, where the scheme operates 6 days a week, a different canteen supplies each day's meals, since no one canteen will supply the whole week's requirements without a subsidy. In order to simplify the tables, where there is more than one source from which meals are obtained, we have taken the main source as that which supplies the greatest number of meals for most of the weeks during which the scheme is operating. Table 33 shows the sources of supply for the various organisations.

T A B L E 33

Main source of supply of meals for organisations

Main sources of Meal	Organisation responsible								All Organ- isations			
	W.V.S.		O.P.W.C.		Red Cross		W.V.S. + O.P.W.C.				L.A.	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Meals cooked by members in:												
Organisation's kitchen	77	22	4	8	4	25	6	19	-	-	91	20
"Borrowed"       "	15	4	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	4
Own homes	5	1	-	-	1	6	-	-	-	-	6	1
School Meals Service	61	18	16	30	2	12	10	31	1	20	90	20
Town Hall Canteen/Restaurant	13	4	6	11	2	13	1	3	1	20	23	5
Industrial Canteen	76	22	5	10	1	6	7	22	-	-	89	20
Private restaurant/cafe	66	19	15	29	3	19	4	13	2	40	90	20
Old Peoples' Homes	6	2	-	-	-	-	1	3	1	20	8	2
Civic Restaurants	19	5	3	6	2	13	1	3	-	-	25	5
Other sources	10	3	2	4	1	6	2	6	-	-	15	3
All sources	348	100	52	100	16	100	32	100	5	100	453	100

A higher proportion of O.P.W.C. schemes have meals supplied by the School Meals' Service, while the W.V.S. have a higher proportion of schemes where members cook the meals. It is surprising to find that 20% of all schemes are supplied by private restaurants or cafes.

Other sources from which meals are obtained are:

Community centres,  
hospitals,  
Salvation Army.

Table 34 opposite shows the main source of supply in regions of England, Wales and Scotland.



T A B L E 34

Main source of supply of meal in regions of England, Wales and Scotland

Source of Meal	N. No. %	N.E. No. %	N.W. No. %	N.Mid. No. %	Midlands No. %	Eastern No. %	Southern No. %	London No. %	S.E. No. %	S.W. No. %	Wales No. %	Scotland No. %	All Schemes No. %
Cooked in loaned kitchen	2 10				2 6	1 3		5 6	2 4	1 4	1 4	2 4	16 4
Cooked in own homes							1 3		1 2	1 4	3 11		6 1
Organisation's kitchen	4 20	1 4	1 2	9 24	7 20	8 27	5 16	19 24	14 28	4 18	15 55	4 9	91 20
School Meals Service	5 25	11 47	3 6	7 19	11 31	8 27	4 13	2 3	6 12		7 26	26 57	90 20
Town Hall canteen		2 8	1 2		1 3		3 9	15 19				1 2	23 5
Industrial canteen	2 10	2 8	36 72	19 51	5 14	3 10	5 16	6 7	5 10	3 14		3 7	89 20
Private restaurant	3 15	6 25	6 12	1 3	3 9	4 13	10 31	22 28	19 38	8 37	1 4	7 15	90 20
Old Persons Home			2 4	1 3	1 3	1 3	1 3	1 1				1 2	8 2
Civic Restaurant	4 20	1 4			5 14	5 17	1 3	4 5	2 4	3 14			25 5
Others		1 4	1 2				2 6	6 7	1 2	2 9		2 4	15 3
Total	20 100	24 100	50 100	37 100	35 100	30 100	32 100	80 100	50 100	22 100	27 100	46 100	453 100

In Wales, 70% of the schemes have the meals cooked by members.

The lowest proportions of schemes where members cook the meals are in North East and North West England and Scotland. In Scotland, nearly 60%, and in North East England nearly 50%, of the schemes use the School Meals Service, while in North West England over 70% of schemes have meals supplied by industrial firms. South East, South West and Southern regions and London have the highest proportion of private restaurant supplying.

Suitability of meals for old people

As far as the menu is concerned, half of the schemes which do not themselves cook meals are able to suggest alterations to the menu, but this possibility varies according to the source of supply, as is shown in Table 35.

T A B L E    35

Source of supply of meals and whether  
organisers say they can make suggestions for altering menus

Source of meal where not cooked by own members	Can alterations to menu be suggested?					
	Yes		No.		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
School Meals Service	29	32	61	68	90	100
Town Hall Canteen/Kitchen	15	65	8	35	23	100
Industrial Canteen	47	53	42	47	89	100
Private Restaurant/Cafe	57	63	33	37	90	100
Old Peoples Home	4	50	4	50	8	100
Civic Restaurant	13	52	12	48	25	100
Others	10	67	5	33	15	100
All sources where not cooked by members	175	51	165	49	340	100

There is less opportunity for suggesting alterations to the menu where the meal is supplied by the School Meals Service than any other outside source; Town Hall restaurants and Canteens accept a higher proportion of suggestions. Asked whether the meal supplied was suitable for old people, 92% of organisers thought it was. There can be little doubt that the suitability of meals depends very largely on the interest taken in old people by the supplier. In some cases organisers have mentioned this fact. One kitchen steward of an old persons home has evolved a system of menus which avoids duplication of any meals over a 6-week period. All schemes getting meals from Town Hall, Old Peoples Home, and miscellaneous sources thought the meals were suitable, compared with 80% using Civic Restaurants, 90% serving School meals, 91% using industrial canteens, and 96% private restaurants.

Changing source of supply

Asked whether they would like to make changes, 36% of organisers of schemes where members cook and 27% of schemes using outside sources, would like to see changes to improve the service - table 36 opposite.



T A B L E 36

Where meal obtained,  
and whether changes wanted by organisers

Source of meals	No changes wanted		Changes wanted		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
School meals	65	73	24	27	89	100
Town Hall	19	83	4	17	23	100
Industrial canteen	73	82	16	18	89	100
Restaurant/Cafe	59	67	29	33	88	100
Old Peoples Homes	4	57	3	43	7	100
Civic Restaurant	13	54	11	46	24	100
Others	13	87	2	13	15	100
All outside sources	246	73	89	27	335	100
Loaned kitchen	9	56	7	44	16	100
Own homes	5	83	1	17	6	100
Organisation kitchen	58	64	33	36	91	100
All own cooking	72	64	41	36	113	100
All schemes (excluding L.A.)	318	71	130	29	448	100

Fewer schemes obtaining meals from Town Hall kitchens and industrial canteens want to get the meal from another source.

42 organisers wanted a kitchen allocated for the cooking of meals by members, including 6 schemes where the members already cook, in their own homes, or in a loaned or shared kitchen.

21 organisers wanted better cooking equipment or appliances. In one scheme all the cooking was done on 2 large gas rings, which meant the menu was limited to stews.

13 organisers wanted a larger kitchen, in one case the kitchen was so small that only "slender" cooks could manage to work in it. In one case the kitchen was a considerable distance from transport, and in 3 cases the kitchen was on upper floors which made it difficult for the cooks to load into the vehicles.

9 organisers (8 using school meals, 1 a cafe) wanted to be able to serve meals all the year round, 10 wanted to supply special diets, and 37 wanted more variety in the meal. Rather surprisingly, 9 of the schemes wanting to supply a more varied diet were those where members cook, but it was explained that lack of proper kitchen equipment or premises, or the need to keep down the price of the meal, precluded this.

#### The meal

The meal usually consists of 2 courses, although in a few cases a 3-course meal is served. Table 37 overleaf shows the sort of meal served.

T A B L E 37

Type of meal served by schemes in  
England and Wales and Scotland

Type of meal	England & Wales		Scotland		Gt. Britain	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Main dish +*sweet	368	94	27	61	395	92
Soup + main dish	-	-	4	9	4	1
Soup, main dish, sweet	14	4	7	16	21	5
Main dish and either soup or sweet	-	-	6	14	6	1
Main dish only	6	2	-	-	6	1
All meals	388**	100*	44**	100	432**	100

\* Main dish is meat or fish, potatoes and a second vegetable. In Scotland soup is counted as a main dish unless it is served in addition to main meal.

\*\* Excludes 5 Local Authority schemes, and 16 schemes not answering.

The 4 schemes where soup is served instead of a sweet are in Scotland, as are the 6 schemes serving sweet and soup alternatively, not necessarily giving the recipient the choice of soup or sweet. Soup is not served in Wales, and in England it is only served in addition to the 2-course meal.

#### What recipients think of the content of the meal

Recipients who were not served with soup were asked whether they would prefer soup to a sweet\*\*\* 98 recipients have soup, of whom 34 were served by Scottish schemes. 23 recipients could not express a preference, and of the 730 expressing a preference 618 (85%) did not want soup instead of a sweet. Table 38 opposite shows the preference for soup and sweet in regions in England, and in Wales and Scotland.

\*\*\* It is unfortunate that this question was not extended to cover those recipients already having soup instead of a sweet, but when the questionnaire was designed, it was not anticipated that soup was served other than as an addition to the meal.



T A B L E 38

Preference for soup or sweet in regions of England, Wales and Scotland

Preference	North		N. East		N. West		N. Midlands		Midlands		Eastern		London		S. East		Southern		S. West		Wales		Scotland		All Areas	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Prefer soup	8	33	4	9	14	17	7	16	14	13	8	19	26	14	8	10	2	6	4	10	8	38	9	31	112	15
Prefer sweet	16	67	42	91	68	83	37	84	96	87	35	81	154	86	71	90	30	94	36	90	13	62	20	69	618	85
All having preference	24	100	46	100	82	100	44	100	110	100	43	100	180	100	79	100	32	100	40	100	21	100	29	100	730	100

It is interesting to note that the highest proportion of those wanting soup is in Wales, where no soup is served. In Scotland about 1/3rd of the recipients would prefer soup!

A number of recipients commented that it was comparatively easy to "open a tin of soup", but not so easy to cook a pie or pudding, or stew fruit and make custard. The sweet is often saved and eaten for tea or supper.

Size of the meal

Table 39 shows whether recipients say they had enough meat, potatoes and green vegetables.

T A B L E 39  
Satisfaction of men and women  
with quantity of food

Type of Food	M A L E S			F E M A L E S			BOTH SEXES		All recip- ients
	Yes	No	All Males	Yes	No.	All Females	Yes	No.	
	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %
Enough meat	231 82	51 18	282 100	506 89	65 11	571 100	737 86	116 14	853 100
Enough potatoes	267 95	15 5	282 100	549 96	22 4	571 100	816 96	37 4	853 100
Enough green vegetables	253 90	29 10	282 100	527 92	44 8	571 100	780 92	73 8	853 100

51 (18%) of the men thought the amount of meat was inadequate against 65 (11%) of women, but roughly the same proportions of men and women said there were not enough potatoes or green vegetables. There were only 23 recipients who thought the whole meal inadequate, and 2 who didn't get enough meat and potatoes, otherwise the dissatisfaction was with one item only.

Satisfaction with cooking

95% of the recipients said they were completely satisfied with the cooking. There was no difference between men and women, or between the various age-groups, although there was a slight tendency for people living in the southern half of England to be more critical than those in the North.

The great majority of recipients are satisfied with the meal they have.



#### IV DELIVERY OF THE MEAL

Recipients are visited by the Organiser of the scheme before meals are served, and told the arrangements for delivery. In most cases they are told the approximate time the meal will be delivered, and asked whether there will be anyone to answer the door. Where informants are bedfast arrangements are sometimes made to have a key left on a string which can be pulled through the letter-box, or left with a neighbour.

The server only spends two or three minutes with each recipient, just long enough to leave the meal and ask if any help is needed. If recipients do need aid, such as calling a doctor, or reading a letter received, or help in filling out a form, a message is sent to the organising centre, and another worker takes the necessary action.

##### Meal Containers

About 5% of the meals are served from bulk containers, but the majority are delivered in individual meal containers, an aluminium base, divided into two portions, one for the main dish and one for the sweet, the container having an aluminium cover. Recipients are asked to have 2 warmed plates ready, and the meal is then transferred to these. Servers are asked to arrange the meal so that it looks attractive and appetizing. There are one or two schemes where the servers leave the container with the meal, and the empty container is collected when the next meal is delivered, but this is generally considered to be unhygienic by the organisers.

##### Keeping the meal hot

Recipients do not always find the meal is hot enough when it is delivered. 34% say they generally, and another 2% say they sometimes, have to re-heat it.

The methods used for keeping the meal hot vary. The most popular is a cabinet where pre-heated charcoal briquettes provide continuous heat throughout the round of meal deliveries. The briquettes do, however, get progressively cooler, and the last meals on a long round suffer accordingly.

These conveyors are made in 3 different sizes, carrying 24, 36 or 48 individual meal containers, and there is available a special car-boot unit, carrying 12 meals. A few schemes use containers continuously heated by compressed gas, and one has a paraffin stove in the van!

The next most popular method is an insulated container which works on the vacuum principle, preheated by steam or boiling water, into which the food is put either in individual dishes, or in bulk.

Where these special containers are not available, the servers have to improvise, using hayboxes, "cosies", hot water bottles, wrapping the meals in blankets or newspapers, etc. Some schemes go to considerable lengths to improvise methods for keeping the meal warm. One scheme uses "cylindrical bags of strong linen, with a wooden base, covered all over with plastic material. These are put in a carton, with hot water bottles, and the whole is covered with a rug. The meals have to be carried down 4 flights of stairs from the canteen, and this is the only way of getting them down to the van." In a few cases, no arrangements are made to keep the meal hot. Some schemes use more than one type of heating equipment; the numbers of meals served in survey week using the various types of equipment are shown in Table 40 overleaf.

T A B L E 40

## Equipment used to keep meals hot

Type of equipment	Meals served	
	No.	%
<u>Individual meal containers</u>		
Continuous heat	18,987	51
Insulated (vacuum)	9,910	27
Some continuous, some vacuum	1,603	4
Some continuous, some improvised	726	2
Improvised	3,446	9
<u>Bulk containers</u>		
Insulated	1,304	3
Not insulated	328	1
No heating equipment	1,147	3
All meals served in survey week	37,451*	100

\* Includes L.A. schemes but excludes 18 schemes not serving meals in survey week, and 9 schemes where type of equipment was not given.

Thus, about 15% of the meals served are not kept hot by any special equipment.

All organisations except the Local Authorities had some schemes using improvised equipment or no heating. The W.V.S. schemes had the highest proportion using continuous heating (42% of all W.V.S. schemes and 50% joint W.V.S. and O.P.W.C.), while the O.P.W.C. had the highest proportion using vacuum containers (53%) and the lowest proportion using an improvised method of heating.

Time taken to complete a delivery round

Since even the charcoal heaters cool off towards the end of a long round, it might be of interest to know how long the round takes. This may be taken as the time between serving the first and last meal, the shortest round taking 12 minutes (to deliver 6 meals) and the longest  $3\frac{1}{4}$  hours. The time taken is given in Table 41.

T A B L E 41

Length of time between  
delivery of first and last meal

Length of delivery	Number of schemes	%
Up to and including $\frac{1}{2}$ hr.	24	5
Over $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. - 1 hr.	114	26
" 1 hr. - $1\frac{1}{2}$ hrs.	160	36
" $1\frac{1}{2}$ " - 2 hrs.	90	20
" 2 hrs.	56	13
All schemes*	444	100

\* Excludes L.A. schemes and 4 not answered.



In one-third of the schemes,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours or more elapse between delivering first and last meal. Rounds in urban areas take longer than in rural areas.\* 35% of rounds in urban districts take 2 hours or longer, against 9% in rural areas. There are proportionally the same number of rounds taking between 1 and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours, while 57% of rural rounds take less than 1 hour against 29% of urban rounds. Table 42 shows the type of heating equipment used in relation to time taken to complete the delivery round.

T A B L E 42

Time taken to complete round  
and type of heating equipment

Type of heating equipment	Time taken to complete round				All rounds
	Up to 1 hr.	1 - 1½ hrs.	1½ - 2 hrs.	2 hrs. & over	
	No.    %	No.    %	No.    %	No.    %	No.    %
Continuous	31    17	62    35	52    29	33    19	178   100
Insulated*	48    32	58    39	28    19	15    10	149   100
Improvised**	45    53	30    35	8    10	2    2	85    100
No heating equipment	9    39	6    26	2    9	6    25	23   100
All schemes giving information about heating and rounds	133   30	156   36	90    21	56    13	435   100

\* Includes 7 schemes using both continuous and insulated.

\*\* Includes 6 schemes using both continuous and improvised.

40 schemes using improvised heating equipment and 14 schemes having no heating at all (12% of all schemes) have rounds taking over 1 hour.

The maximum heat retention of briquettes in standard units is given as 4-5 hours and in portable units as  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -3 hours including preheating. 1 hour is generally allowed by the W.V.S. for preheating. Time taken in getting the vehicle with its heated equipment to the place from which the meal is obtained, and then the time taken from kitchen to first call must therefore be added to the length of the round. If one takes an arbitrary standard of effectiveness of heating equipment as:-

Continuous heating is satisfactory for the first  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours of delivery

Insulated heating is satisfactory for the first 1 hour of delivery

Improvised heating is satisfactory for the first  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour of delivery

No heating is satisfactory for the first 10 minutes

it could be calculated that of the 178 schemes using continuous equipment 85% of recipients would get a reasonably hot meal, compared with 77% where insulated, and just less than one half where improvised, equipment is being used. Only about 5% would be satisfactory where no heating equipment is used.

\* The number of recipients is generally smaller in rural schemes. More private cars are used in rural areas, so that the distance covered by each delivery vehicle is shorter.

This would mean that just over 70% of recipients would get a reasonably hot meal - which compares very closely with what the recipients themselves say, (page 35).

Changes with regard to heating equipment

The national policy of all organisations is to encourage local schemes to use special equipment to keep meals hot. The W.V.S. Headquarters has prepared a special booklet dealing with Meals-on-Wheels, a section of which is devoted to description and diagrams of the charcoal heating and insulated conveyors, and advising on how to make the best use of this equipment.

The organisers of local schemes were asked if there were any changes they would like to make with regard to the equipment or delivery.

T A B L E    43  
Type of heating equipment,  
and whether changes are desirable

Type of heating equipment	No Change		Change desirable		All schemes	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Individual meal containers</u>						
Continuous heat	155	86	26	14	181	100
Insulated	105	88	14	12	119	100
Some continuous, some insulated	10	83	2	17	12	100
Some continuous, some improvised	8	62	5	38	13	100
Improvised	58	79	15	21	73	100
<u>Bulk containers</u>						
Insulated	12	50	12	50	24	100
Not insulated	1	33	2	67	3	100
No heating	11	55	9	45	20	100
All types of heating (excluding 8 not answering)	360	81	85	19	445	100

19% of schemes (roughly the same proportion for all organisations), think there should be changes made to equipment or delivery.

74 of the changes would have the effect of ensuring a better meal on delivery since 39 schemes want better heating equipment, and 35 schemes would like shorter delivery rounds. Of the 20 schemes having no heating equipment, 9 want proper heating, while 2 want shorter rounds, leaving 9 schemes where changes are not considered necessary. Of the 73 schemes using improvised heating equipment, 58 are satisfied.

Other changes not affecting the warmth of the meal are concerned with making the serving of meals easier for volunteers (mostly by the use of individual meal containers rather than bulk food containers) and making the times more convenient for servers. 2 organisers would like to use lightweight aluminium foil containers which could be destroyed after use. 2 would like clear plastic lids, as recipients are given a choice of meal, which tends to cool when lids are removed to show the variety.

The reasons given for not making changes thought to be desirable are lack of funds to purchase better heating equipment, and lack of transport or workers, or both, for shortening the rounds.



Vehicles used for transport

The type of vehicles used for transporting meals is shown in table 44.

T A B L E 44

Type of vehicles used for transport

Type of vehicle	O r g a n i s a t i o n						All Schemes					
	W.V.S.	O.P.W.C.	Red Cross	W.V.S. + O.P.W.C.	L.A.							
	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %						
Special Meals-on-wheels van	15	4	14	27	4	25	4	13	1	20	38	8
Special Meals-on-wheels van + private cars	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1
Special Meals-on-wheels van + van used for other purposes	7	2	-	-	1	6	1	3	-	-	9	2
Van used for M.O.W. and other purposes	123	35	20	38	6	38	14	44	4	80	167	37
Van used for M.O.W. and other purposes + private cars	47	14	2	4	-	-	1	3	-	-	50	11
Private cars	142	41	11	21	5	31	9	28	-	-	167	37
Private cars + hired cars	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1
Hired cars/taxis	2	1	5	10	-	-	3	9	-	-	10	2
Manually propelled	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
All types of vehicles	348	100	52	100	16	100	32	100	5	100	453	100

A smaller proportion of W.V.S. schemes (7%) have a special van used only for Meals-on-Wheels, and a far higher proportion (41%) depend on private cars for the whole delivery, than other organisations. Private cars are used for delivery of some of the meals in a further 15% of W.V.S. schemes. O.P.W.C. schemes tend to use hired cars and taxis more than other organisations.

In the 2 cases where manually propelled vehicles are used, one vehicle is a child's push-cart, and the other a bath-chair.

No changes or improvement of transport were thought to be desirable in 70% of schemes. Alterations needed to improve the service are shown in Table 45.

T A B L E 45

Changes of transport facilities  
needed by organisations to improve service

Changes needed to improve Service	W.V.S.		O.P.W.C.		Red Cross		O.P.W.C. + W.V.S.		L.A.		All Organi- sations	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No changes	234	67	42	81	11	69	26	81	5	100	318	70
Own van/special M.O.W. van	76	22	4	7	3	19	3	10	-	-	86	19
Additional van	15	4	2	4	1	6	1	3	-	-	19	4
More private cars	12	4	1	2	-	-	1	3	-	-	14	3
Alterations to existing van	4	1	1	2	-	-	1	3	-	-	6	1
Replacement of existing van	6	2	1	2	1	6	-	-	-	-	8	2
Misc.	1	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1
All schemes	348	100	52	100	16	100	32	100	5	100	453	100

22% of W.V.S. schemes and 19% of Red Cross schemes would like a van specially allocated for meals-on-wheels work. 5 of the 105 schemes wanting vans are already making arrangements to get them, or are awaiting delivery. It was pointed out that where vans were used jointly for meals-on-wheels and other purposes, the van was not always available at the right time for delivery.

The 2 miscellaneous answers cover the garaging of vehicles. At present the garages are some miles from the meal centre, and in one case negotiations are already in hand to have the vans garaged at more convenient sites.

Time of delivery of first meal

One scheme starts delivering at 10 o'clock in the morning. Two other schemes start at 10.15 a.m., 1 at 10.35 a.m. and 1 at 10.45 a.m. The time the first meal is delivered by various organisations is shown in Table 46.

T A B L E 46

Time schemes of main organisations deliver first meal

Time first meal delivered	O r g a n i s a t i o n s										All Organi- sations	
	W.V.S.		O.P.W.C.		Red Cross		W.V.S. + O.P.W.C.		L.A.			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Before 11.30 a.m.	80	23	9	17	3	20	6	19	1	20	99	22
11.30 - 11.59 a.m.	172	50	20	38	9	60	12	37	4	80	217	48
12 noon - 12.29 p.m.	88	25	18	35	3	20	14	44	-	-	123	28
12.30 and later	6	2	5	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	2
All deliveries	346	100	52	100	15	100	32	100	5	100	450*	100

\* Excludes 3 not answered (2 W.V.S., 1 Red Cross)

Of the 11 schemes starting 12.30 or later, only one served the first meal after 1 p.m. O.P.W.C. and joint W.V.S./O.P.W.C. schemes have a higher proportion of schemes starting to serve meals between 12 noon and 1 p.m. than the other organisations.

Time recipients receive meals

The data just presented do not give us a distribution of the number of people getting meals at various times, and recipients were asked at what time the meal is normally delivered. 75 (9%) recipients said the time varied. Sometimes the round was started at different points each delivery day to ensure a fair share of the hottest meals. This happens more often in London than in any other area. The times recipients receive meals are given in Table 47. Recipients who receive meals at varying times are excluded from this table.



T A B L E 47

Times meals received by  
recipients having regular deliveries

Time meal received	Recipients	
	No.	%
Before 12 noon	229	29
12 noon - 12.59 p.m.	420	54
1 - 2 p.m.	122	16
After 2 p.m.	7	1
All having "regular" deliveries	778	100

Asked if this was the time that suited them best 84% thought it was most suitable, while 8% said they would prefer it earlier, and 8% later. This preference, analysed by the time the meal is delivered, is given in Table 48.

T A B L E 48

Time meal delivered, and whether  
recipient would prefer earlier or later

Time delivered	Prefer earlier		Best time		Prefer later		All recipients	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Before 12 noon	-	-	177	77	52	23	229	100
Noon - 12.59 p.m.	17	4	392	93	11	3	420	100
1 - 1.59 p.m.	43	35	78	64	1	1	122	100
2 p.m. or later	4	57	3	43	-	-	7	100
All regular deliveries	64	8	650	84	64	8	778	100

A far greater proportion of recipients getting meals between 12 and 1 p.m. are satisfied with the time of delivery than any other group. If we assume that recipients preferring meals earlier or later would only want to move one group in the appropriate direction, we can estimate that a delivery time between 12 and 1 would satisfy 486 recipients (62%), before 12 would satisfy 194 (25%), and 1 - 2 p.m. would satisfy 93 (12%).

#### When do recipients eat the meal

53% of recipients eat the meal as soon as it is delivered, and another 28% eat immediately after reheating. The length of time which elapses between delivery of the meal and when it is eaten is shown in Table 49 overleaf.

T A B L E 49

How long after delivery meal is eaten  
where recipients would prefer meal earlier or later

When eaten	Prefer earlier delivery		Delivered at best time		Prefer later delivery		All recipients	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Within a few minutes	33	47	391	57	12	18	436	53
Immediately after reheating	29	41	201	29	5	8	235	28
$\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ hour later	2	3	26	4	3	5	31	4
$\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 hour later	4	6	37	5	7	11	48	6
1 hour or more later	2	3	37	5	38	58	77	9
Total	70	100	692	100	65	100	827	100

58% of recipients preferring a later delivery save the meal for over 1 hour before eating it. 9% of those preferring earlier delivery, and 10% of those having the meal delivered at the best time, save the meal for  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour or more. It may be that the reason for wanting the meal delivered earlier is for some domestic reason - e.g. there is someone at home to take it in. The numbers on which these percentages are based are, however, very small, and too much significance should not be attached to this apparent inconsistency.



## V DO THE NUMBER OF MEALS SATISFY THE DEMANDS OF PRESENT RECIPIENTS?

### Number of meals served

The total number of meals served to recipients in the sample during the survey week was 1,661. The varying number of meals given to individual recipients during the survey week is given in Table 50.

T A B L E 50

Number of meals delivered to  
recipients in survey week

Number of meals during survey week	Recipients	
	No.	%
1	374	44
2	319	37
3	57	7
4	37	4
5 or more	66	8
All numbers of meals	853	100

Thus 81% of the recipients in the sample had 1 or 2 meals and 19% had 3 or more meals in the week. The sample thus compares very closely with number of meals organisers state are served (table 9). The number of meals served to each recipient includes 31 "reserve" meals, i.e. an extra meal to be kept for the next day. 14 recipients have 2 meals, served at each delivery, and a further 8 have 2 meals on one of the delivery days. The highest proportion of recipients having "reserve" meals are in London, where 10% of the recipients are given "one for tomorrow", "tomorrow" usually being Saturday. This practice is frowned upon by medical authorities, since part of the nutrient value is lost by warming up food, and there is also the possibility of cooked food becoming tainted.

### Making meals last 2 days

12% of recipients generally make the meal last for two days; 18% of those getting one meal a week do this, 10% of those getting two meals a week, and 3% of those getting 3 or more meals a week. Some recipients commented that they would like to make it last for 2 days, but the meal wasn't large enough for this purpose. Some save part of the meal to eat later in the day, eating the sweet for supper, or saving the potatoes to fry up for the next day's breakfast. A few would like to save the meal, but find it too appetizing to leave once they start to eat it.

### Does number of meals received vary with income?

#### Income of recipients

All recipients in the sample were asked to state the amount of income from specified sources (qn 1, classification of interview schedule - Appendix B). For married recipients the joint income of husband and wife was recorded.

Amount of income of recipients

53 recipients could not, or would not, disclose the amount of income.

The income of "single" recipients (including widows, separated, etc.) ranged from two with no income, and two getting 22/- and 23/- a week respectively to one with an income of £10.10.0d. a week. The joint incomes ranged from one couple getting 46/- a week to one couple with an income of £10.18.0d. Table 51 gives the frequency distribution for income groups.

T A B L E    51  
Grouped income of recipients

Weekly Income (grouped)	Single Incomes		Joint Income	
	No.	%	No.	%
Up to and including 54/-	141	21	1 )	
55/- - 64/-	203	30	3 )	15
65/- - 74/-	156	23	1 )	
75/- - 84/-	92	14	14 )	
85/- - 94/-	31	5	13	10
95/- - 104/-	19	3	33	25
105/- - 114/-	10 )		17	13
115/- - 124/-	4 )		16	12
125/- - 134/-	4 )	4	8	6
135/- - 144/-	4 )		6	5
145/- - 164/-	1 )		9	7
165/- - 184/-	2 )		4 )	
185/- - and over	2 )		6 )	7
All income groups	699	100	131	100

Over half recipients with single-incomes have a total weekly income of less than 65/-, and almost three-quarters have a total income of less than 75/- a week. A very small proportion of these recipients have over £5 a week. Half the joint incomes are less than £5.5.0d. a week, three-quarters are under £6.5.0d., and about 16% of joint incomes are £7 or more a week.

The original data shows the average weekly income of single recipients to be 68/2d. The average weekly joint income is £5.14.10d.

The number of meals delivered to recipients in various income groups is given in Table 52 opposite.



T A B L E 52

Number of meals received by recipients in various income groups

Number of meals delivered per week	Income group of recipients with self-income						All self incomes		Income group of recipients with joint incomes		
	0 - 59/- No.    %	60 - 69/- No.    %	70 - 79/- No.    %	80 - 89/- No.    %	90/- and over No.    %		No.    %		Under £5 No.    %	£5 and over No.    %	All joint incomes No.    %
One	110   48	98   51	56   43	23   40	15   25		302   45		24   49	33   40	57   44
Two	85   37	68   35	44   33	25   44	28   48		250   37		19   39	34   42	53   40
Three	13   6	9   5	15   11	3   5	6   10		46   7		1   2	4   5	5   4
Four or more	20   9	18   9	17   13	6   11	10   17		71   11		5   10	11   13	16   12
All recipients with self-income	228   100	193   100	132   100	57   100	59   100		669   100		49   100	82   100	131   100

For the majority of recipients, income does not appear to affect the number of meals received. This is to be expected, since we know that in many cases the number of meals is limited by the capacity of the schemes.

#### Do recipients want more meals delivered?

For most recipients the number of meals delivered is the maximum number offered to them by the supplying organisation. Organisers stated that during the survey week only 416 recipients (0.5%) had refused some meals. The main reason for not taking as many as were offered was a temporary absence from home, either for the whole week or on one particular day, or illness. Very few refused meals regularly.

Recipients were asked if they would like meals delivered on more days. 321 recipients in the sample (38%) did not want extra meals. The reasons given by recipients for not wanting more meals are shown in Table 53. The desire for more meals was not influenced to any significant degree by the number of meals a week recipients were already receiving, the same proportion of those receiving 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 meals a week saying no more were wanted.

T A B L E 53

Reasons for meals-on-wheels  
not being wanted more days a week

Reasons for not wanting meals on more days	Number of meals delivered per week per recipient				All Recipients not wanting more meals
	One No.    %	Two No.    %	Three No.    %	Four or more No.    %	
Manage with number supplied	44    34	53    41	10    38	16    46	123    39
Cannot afford it	28    22	24    19	4    15	1    3	57    18
Catered for by relatives	26    20	23    18	3    11	12    34	64    20
Small appetite - don't eat much	16    12	7    5	2    7	-    -	25    8
Not enough variety, etc.	7    5	10    8	4    15	2    6	23    7
Like to cook sometimes	6    5	10    8	3    11	5    14	24    8
Miscellaneous	5    4	3    2	2    7	1    3	11    3
Do not like to be tied down	3    2	1    1	-    -	-    -	4    1
Recipients not wanting extra meals	129    104*	128    102*	26    106*	35    106*	318    104*

\* Per cents add to more than 100 since some recipients gave more than one reason.

The people giving miscellaneous reasons included 3 recipients who thought there might be others more in need of extra meals, and 1 who didn't want to be a bother. 2 didn't like callers, and one married lady said that her husband could only eat soup just now, and it hardly seemed worth while having meals delivered for herself.

39% of recipients not wanting more meals say they don't need extra, and of those receiving only one meal per week a high proportion give this reason. 18% of those wanting more say they can't afford more; this reason is given much more often by people only getting one, two or three meals than those getting 4 or more. 20% of recipients not wanting meals have help from relatives on some days.



Recipients wanting more meals

516 recipients in the sample (62%) said they would like more meals.

How many more meals would recipients like?

In order to get a reasonable estimate of the number of meals recipients would like, and the number they would accept if offered them, it would be necessary to ask several detailed questions. For example, one might ask for each day separately whether recipients could themselves get a proper meal, or had anyone else who could supply one. If they did not get a proper meal, would they like one delivered on that day. If not, why not? If they said they couldn't afford it, would they like the meal delivered if it were cheaper, or if the total weekly bill for meals were to be reduced to various different levels. There may be other factors involved, such as the meal not being suitable for particular recipients' needs if taken more often.

In this survey, however, we felt we could not reasonably look into this question of demand as fully as we would have liked, since we knew that in most cases little additional demand could be met by the supplying organisations at that time. A full enquiry into additional meals wanted might therefore have raised the hopes of recipients for more, better and cheaper meals, and would have seriously embarrassed the voluntary organisations.

For this reason we had to limit the questioning to how many more meals and on what days recipients would like meals if the organisation could deliver every day. Table 54 shows, for recipients who want more meals, how many extra they would like.

T A B L E    54  
Number of meals received per week  
and number of extra meals wanted

Number of meals received per week	Number of extra meals wanted						All wanting extra meals							
	One		Two		Three			Four		Five		Six		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	169	70	37	15	5	2	4	2	5	2	21	9	241	100
2	60	31	67	36	23	12	8	4	33	17	-	-	191	100
3	9	30	12	40	3	10	6	20	-	-	-	-	30	100
4	4	25	2	12	10	63	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	100
5	5	13	33	87	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	38	100
All recipients wanting extra meals	247	48	151	29	41	8	18	4	38	7	21	4	516	100

We see that among those receiving one meal a week the largest demand (70%) is for one extra meal; among those receiving 2 or 3, the largest demands (36% and 40%) are for 2 extra, while for those receiving 4 meals the greatest demand (63%) is for 3 extra.

It is clear that the answers to the number of extra meals wanted are not purely random, nor are recipients tending to ask for a sufficient number of meals to bring their supply up to 7. This is seen from table 55; only 15% ask for a total of 6-7 meals a week.

T A B L E    55

Number of meals recipients  
state they would like

Total number of meals recipients say they would like*	Recipients	
	No.	%
1 meal per week	130	16
2 meals per week	298	36
3 meals per week	124	15
4 meals per week	96	11
5 meals per week	63	7
6 meals per week	23	3
7 meals per week	103	12
All recipients	837	100

\* Obtained by adding the number now received to the number of extra meals they would like.

However, it is also clear that conclusions cannot be drawn from Table 56 without some qualifications. It appears from this table that 52% of recipients would be satisfied by 1 or two meals. We have seen however, that demand (as stated by recipients) appears to be related to the actual number being received, and we know that the number of meals delivered is limited at present by the scope of the service, and not by the recipients' needs.

The fact, therefore, that the majority receiving one at present ask for only one more, while the majority of those receiving three want two more, suggests that they are asking not for what they need and would really like, but for what from their experience they think might be possible.

This suggests that the percentages in table 55 who would be satisfied with 1, 2 or 3 meals may well be over-estimates.

Days on which meals are served

There is another aspect to consider, that is, whether the schemes are supplying meals on the days they are most needed.

Only 11 recipients in the sample had meals-on-wheels during the week-end, one having a meal every day. The days on which meals-on-wheels were served (including those from the day before) are shown in Table 56 opposite.



T A B L E 56

Days on which recipients have meals-on-wheels

D a y	Recipients having meals	
	No.	%
Monday	168	10
Tuesday	485	29
Wednesday	290	18
Thursday	419	25
Friday	288	17
Saturday/Sunday	11	1
All days	1,661	100

There are administrative reasons for meals not being served at week-ends. Many of the meals are obtained from the School Meals Service, or industrial canteens, etc. (table 33) which cannot supply at the week-ends. There is also the difficulty of getting volunteers to give up week-ends for this service, particularly when most women are giving special attention to their own families. It is sometimes suggested that it is not as necessary to supply meals at week-ends, as neighbours, or working relatives are more likely to help on these days, and also leave "something cold" for Mondays, which accounts for the small proportion of meals being served on that day.

T A B L E 57

Days meals delivered and extra meals wanted

Day of week	Days recipients have meals delivered		Days on which recipients would like meals delivered		Total demand for meals	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Monday	168	10	145	14	313	12
Tuesday	485	29	109	10	594	22
Wednesday	290	18	161	16	451	17
Thursday	419	25	149	14	568	21
Friday	288	17	185	18	473	17
Saturday )	10 )	1	164	16	174 )	6
)	)				)	
Sunday )	1 )	-	127	12	128 )	5
All days	1,661	100	1,040	100	2,701	100

It would therefore appear that apart from week-ends, fewer recipients say that they would like meals on Monday than on any other day of the week.

#### Does income effect demand for meals

The number of meals recipients at different income levels say they would like is shown in table 58 overleaf.

T A B L E 58

Number of meals recipients at various income levels would like

Total number of meals per week wanted	WEEKLY SINGLE INCOME						JOINT INCOME			
	0-59/-	60/- - 69/-	70/- - 79/-	80/- - 89/-	90/- and over	All single incomes	0 - 99/-	100/- +	All joint incomes	
	No.    %	No.    %	No.    %	No.    %	No.    %	No.    %	No.    %	No.    %	No.    %	
ONE	45    20	30    16	18    14	7    13	4    7	104   16	9    20	14   18	23   18	
TWO	82    37	77    40	39    31	18    33	13   23	229   35	19   41	25   32	44   35	
THREE	30    13	27    14	20    16	9    16	8    14	94    14	5    11	8    10	13   10	
FOUR	21    9	17    9	17    14	8    14	6    10	69    11	4    9	13   16	17   14	
FIVE	16    7	13    7	14    11	5    9	8    14	56    9	3    6	2    3	5    4	
SIX	1    1	6    3	5    4	2    4	4    7	18    3	1    2	4    5	5    4	
SEVEN	29    13	21    11	12    10	6    11	14   25	82    12	5    11	13   16	18   15	
TOTAL	224   100	191   100	125   100	55    100	57    100	652   100	46   100	79   100	125   100	



A higher proportion of recipients with an income of under £3 would like one meal a week compared with those with an income £3 - £3.9.0., the proportionate demand for one meal decreasing as the income level rises. Recipients with an income of under £3.10.0. ask for two meals more often than those in the higher income groups. The proportions wanting 3 or 4 meals are fairly evenly distributed among income groups, but whereas 14% of recipients with incomes of under £4 want 6 or 7 meals, 32% with an income of £4.10.0. or more say they would like 6 or 7 meals a week.

#### Amount charged for the meal

The whole question of whether income affects the number of meals wanted is somewhat complicated by the fact that not all recipients pay the same amount for the meal. While it is the policy of all organisations to make some charge, it is left to the individual organisers to decide what that charge should be. In fact, 34 of the 853 recipients were supplied with free meals, and the average charge to recipients was 11.35d per meal. The price paid by recipients in regions of England, Wales and Scotland is shown in Table 59.

The average price paid for a meal in Scotland is higher than in England and Wales; it should be borne in mind that the interviewing in Scotland was carried out 8 months after that in England and Wales, and it is possible that prices might have risen slightly. Recipients in the north of England (North, North-Eastern and North-Western areas) and in London and South-Eastern areas, pay less per meal than in the rest of England and Wales.

Price per meal paid by recipients in Regions of  
England and Wales (November, 1958) and in Scotland (June, 1959)

Price per meal paid by recipients	N.		N.E.		N.W.		N. Mid.		Midlands		Eastern		Southern		London		S.E.		S.W.		Wales		Scotland		All Areas	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Free	-	-	-	-	1	5	2	2	2	5	3	5	1	2	25	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	34	4
9d. or less	-	-	46	98	20	95	-	-	-	-	2	3	15	23	1	1	26	40	46	24	8	24	-	-	164	19
10d. or 11d.	24	50	-	-	-	-	20	23	-	-	-	-	4	6	-	-	16	25	62	33	-	-	-	-	126	15
1/-	24	50	1	2	-	-	64	75	39	95	40	61	2	3	61	54	21	32	41	22	21	61	17	21	331	39
1/1 - 1/3d.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	31	43	66	24	21	2	3	22	12	-	-	42	53	153	18
1/4d. or more	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	17	9	5	15	21	26	45	5
All prices	48	100	47	100	21	100	86	100	41	100	65	100	65	100	113	100	65	100	188	100	34	100	80	100	853	100
AVERAGE PRICE PER MEAL	<sup>d</sup> 11.25	<sup>d</sup> 9.06	<sup>d</sup> 8.57	<sup>d</sup> 11.37	<sup>d</sup> 11.41	<sup>d</sup> 11.97	<sup>d</sup> 12.35	<sup>d</sup> 9.83	<sup>d</sup> 10.49	<sup>d</sup> 11.46	<sup>d</sup> 12.03	<sup>d</sup> 14.36	<sup>d</sup> 11.35											<sup>d</sup> 14.36	<sup>d</sup> 11.35	



How the charge for meals is decided upon

Cost of the meal to organisations

The average cost of producing a cooked meal in those schemes where the members do the cooking is 1/6d. and the average cost to organisations where the meal is not cooked by members is 1/8½d. The cost of the meal from various sources is given in table 60.\*

T A B L E 60  
Cost of meal from various sources

Source of meal	Cost of meal to scheme						Aver. cost per meal to schemes
	Up to & including 1/2d.	1/3d.-1/8d.	1/9d.-2/-	Over 2/-	All prices		
	No.   %	No.   %	No.   %	No.   %	No.   %		
Cooked by members	31   29	44   41	24   22	9    8	108 100	1s. 6d.	
School Meals Service	-    -	36   45	27   34	17   21	80 100	1s. 9½d.	
Industrial Canteen	10   12	45   53	27   32	3    3	85 100	1s. 6½d.	
Private restaurants	4    4	29   33	46   52	10   11	89 100	1s. 10d.	
Town Hall/Civic Restaurants	5    11	20   42	13   28	9    19	47 100	1s. 9½d.	
Other sources	3    14	12   54	3    14	4    18	22 100	1s. 6½d.	
All sources	53   12	186   43	140   33	52   12	431* 100	1s. 8d.	

\* Excludes 22 schemes where cost of meal was not known or not given.

The cheapest meals, as far as cost to the scheme is concerned, are obtained in one scheme where an industrial canteen supplies meals free of charge, and the most expensive is produced at an estimated cost of 4/- a meal by a scheme where the members do the cooking.

If the charge to the recipient is based on the cost of the meal, it could be expected that the schemes where members cook would charge a lower price than those schemes where meals are purchased ready-cooked, and that schemes using private restaurants would charge the most, the next highest being where meals are obtained from the School Meals Service and Town Hall/Civic Restaurants, and the cheapest from industrial canteens and other sources.

\* This is the cost to the organisation of the meal itself, and may not be the real cost. For example, where members of organisations cook the meal themselves, some have noted that vegetables, etc. are given free, and in many cases no rent or fuel charges are paid. Meals from industrial canteens are nearly always subsidized by the firms supplying the meals.

It should be remembered that the cost of delivery, maintenance and depreciation of capital equipment, and wages if any, must be added to the cost of the meal to arrive at the full cost of the Meals-on-Wheels Service.

Price charged for meal

The standard charge to the recipient (i.e. the price paid by most people covered by particular schemes) varies between 3d. and 2/-, per meal, with 2 schemes giving most of the recipients free meals. The price to recipients, analysed by the source of the meal, is given in table 61.

T A B L E 61  
Standard charge to recipients analysed by  
source of meal (Organiser's information)

Source of meal	Standard charge											
	9d. or less		10d./11d.		1/-		1/1d.-1/3d.		1/4d. or more		All prices	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Cooked by members	17	15	8	7	56	50	24	21	8	7	113	100
<u>Outside sources</u>												
School Meals Service	11	13	4	5	36	41	20	23	16	18	87	100
Industrial canteen	7	8	5	6	54	62	17	20	4	4	87	100
Private restaurants	11	13	11	13	33	37	24	27	9	10	88	100
Town Hall/Civic Restaurants	12	25	16	33	9	19	8	17	3	6	48	100
Others	5	23	8	36	3	14	4	18	2	9	22	100
All outside sources	46	14	44	13	135	41	73	22	34	10	332	100
All sources	63	14	52	12	191	43	97	22	42	9	445*	100

\* Excludes 8 organisers not answering, but including a number of schemes knowing charge made for, but not cost of meal.

Of the schemes where members cook the meal, 50% set a standard charge of 1/-, compared with 41% of schemes where meals are not cooked by members, but the difference of 9% is evenly split into schemes with a standard charge of less than 1/- and more than 1/-. Where meals are obtained through the School Meals Service and private restaurants, a higher proportion of schemes set a standard charge of more than 1/-, and where meals are obtained from Town Hall canteens, civic restaurants, old peoples homes, etc. the standard charge is well below the average.

Those schemes obtaining meals from Town Hall or Civic Restaurants charge recipients less than schemes where members cook or meals are obtained from other outside sources. Schemes using School Meals Service charge the most, followed by schemes getting meals from private restaurants. There is no evidence of a direct link between cost of the meal to the scheme, and the standard price charged to recipients. What is clear is that recipients are not charged the full cost of the meals. The standard charge is less than the cost of the meal to the service in all but 3 cases: the average subsidy on the meal itself (excluding delivery, administration, etc.) is 7½d.

Once the price is fixed, it usually applies to all recipients covered by the scheme, although in 28 cases (6%) the charge varies, some recipients paying more and some less than the standard charge. Variations in price are sometimes made where recipients do not take the full meal, e.g. recipients in one scheme pay 9d. for either meat and soup or meat and pudding,



or 6d. for soup and pudding. In another 1/8d. is charged for full meal, and 1/4d. for main course only. In one scheme a single recipient is charged 1/6d., but if 2 meals are delivered to the same household (e.g. husband and wife, 2 sisters) the charge for the double meal is 2/6d. In one scheme the charge varies according to the number taken, 1ld. per meal for the first and second meal in a week, any further meals, up to a maximum of five, costing 1/5d. each. In other schemes where the price varies between recipients, it is on the basis of whether the organiser thinks the recipient is unable to pay the standard price (e.g. standard price 1/2d. - if receiving National Assistance 8d.) rather than whether the recipient is able to pay more than the standard rate. It is perhaps, significant that where recipients are in receipt of National Assistance grants or have only the retirement pension, the average weekly charge is 1/8d., whereas if recipients have an income from other sources the average weekly charge is 2/-.

## VI DO THE MEALS SATISFY THE NEEDS OF RECIPIENTS?

### Who provides dinners when meals-on-wheels not delivered?

Recipients were asked how meals were provided on week-days and Sundays when meals-on-wheels were not delivered. Replies are given in table 62.

T A B L E 62

How meal is provided when meals-on-wheels not delivered

Who supplies dinner when meals-on-wheels not delivered	Weekday		Sunday	
	No.	%	No.	%
No-one helps - informants cook for themselves	320	38	394	47
No-one helps - informants have cold meal/ tinned food/do without	289	34	120	14
Helped some days, other days cook	14	2	11	1
Helped some days, other days cold meal	44	5	6	1
Meal supplied by:-				
Other member of household	85	10	103	12
Relative outside household	30	3	104	12
Home help	24	3	14	2
Neighbours/friends	32	4	95	11
Go to cafe	11	1	3	-
All recipients	849*	100	850**	100

\* Excludes 1 having 7 meals a week and 3 not answering

\*\* Excludes 1 having 7 meals a week and 2 not answering

On weekdays 72% of recipients have no-one to help them get a meal unless a meal-on-wheels is delivered, and nearly half of these say they have cold or tinned food, or do without a dinner. 7% have help with cooking on some days, and 20% have meals supplied or cooked for them when meals-on-wheels are not delivered.

On Sundays, 47% of recipients cook a dinner for themselves. It was shown in table 24 that 96 recipients said they could cook for themselves, but couldn't cook every day; since Sunday is traditionally the day on which one has a cooked dinner, it is probable that recipients who can't cook every day harbour their resources until Sunday. This could account for the increased proportion cooking for themselves on this day.

37% of recipients are supplied with a cooked dinner on Sundays; relatives outside the household, and neighbours and friends provide cooked meals more often on Sundays than on weekdays.

All age-groups get help on Sundays from similar sources, but a smaller proportion of men say they cook for themselves on Sundays, (35% of men compared with 54% of women) and a higher proportion of men have Sunday meals cooked for them by another member of the household (20% men compared with 8% of women).

It is interesting to note that Home Helps cook or supply meals for 24 recipients when they don't get meals-on-wheels on weekdays, and also supply 18 recipients with meals on some of the weekdays.

Recipients were asked if they got one good meal every day. No attempt was made to define what a good meal was - it was left to the recipient's own judgement. 327 of the 850 recipients answering (38%) said they did not get at least one good meal every day. 38 of these recipients added that they didn't feel they wanted one every day, 34 said they could not afford it, and 7 mentioned that they didn't get a good meal at weekends.

Nearly half the women recipients living alone said they did not have one good meal every day, compared with 38% of male recipients living alone, 28% of recipients living with a spouse, and 24% living in households containing other people.

#### Main meal eaten the day prior to interview

All recipients were asked to say what they had to eat the day before the interview (yesterday) and the day before that. Interviewers made no attempt to obtain quantities. Where fruit was not mentioned, the additional question "...say fresh fruit/tomatoes" was put, since this important part of the diet was found on the pilot survey to be the food informants "forgot" if it was not taken as part of the meal. It is not possible from this data to decide whether the informants are being sufficiently nourished, or how much the meal-on-wheel contributes to the diet. A specially designed survey on this one topic would be needed to decide this - but the limited information obtained will give a very rough guide to what sort of meals old people have.

#### Main meal

In most cases it was easy to decide which was the main meal of the day. Where there was no meal which was obviously the main one, that which was most varied with regard to protein, (meat, fish, cheese, eggs) carbohydrates (bread, cakes, potatoes), vitamins (green vegetables, fruit) was taken. Meals were classified as consisting of any combination of the following foods:-

Protein

Potatoes

Other vegetables (cooked)

Vegetables (uncooked) - mainly salad vegetables

Fruit

Carbohydrates (cereals, bread, cakes, etc.)

Fats (butter, margarine, dripping)

Milk drinks and milk puddings (excluding those made with eggs)

Soups

A summary of this classification is given in table 63 In 258 cases meals-on-wheels were delivered; where meals-on-wheels were not delivered, figures are given separately for Sundays and other days.



T A B L E 63

Type of main meal eaten by recipients the day before interview

Type of main meal day before interview	Meals-on-wheels delivered		Not a meals-on-wheels day			
			Sunday		Other days	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Protein + green vegetables + potatoes or bread and butter or both	49	19	54	44	118	26
As above, with fruit instead of, or in addition to green vegetables, plus soup or milk	201	78	49	40	89	20
Protein + vegetables or fruit or milk or soup	1	-	3	2	17	4
Protein and either potatoes and bread and butter or both (no green vegetables, fruit, milk, etc.)	4	2	17	14	182	40
Bread and butter/bread and milk/bread and potatoes/bread and vegetables/soup (no protein)	3	1	-	-	36	8
Other meals with no protein, but either milk or fruit	-	-	-	-	7	2
Nothing to eat, drinks only	-	-	-	-	2	-
All types of meals	258	100	123	100	451	100

21 recipients who could not remember or did not answer are excluded from this table.

It will be seen that when meals-on-wheels are delivered, 97% of recipients have a varied\* meal. On Sundays when meals-on-wheels are not delivered, 84% have a varied meal, while 2% have no carbohydrates and 14% have no green vegetables or fruit. On other days, when meals-on-wheels are not delivered, less than half recipients have a balanced meal, 40% have no green vegetables, and 10% have no proteins apart from milk.

Recipients in all age-groups show roughly the same proportions getting different types of main meals, but men tend to have a higher proportion of meals lacking vitamins. There is no evidence to show that the type of main meal differs at different levels of income.

#### Main meal when not getting meals-on-wheels

It might be expected that recipients who have to get their own meals would be less likely to have a varied meal than those who have a main meal brought in ready-cooked by relatives or friends (57 recipients were catered for in this way the day prior to interview), or cooked at home by relatives, friends, or home helps (129 recipients) or go out to a restaurant, or cafe or to friends for the main meal (20 recipients).

Table 64 shows the type of main meal on days when meals-on-wheels were not delivered, and whether recipients catered for themselves or had the meal supplied ready cooked.

\* A "varied" meal is one that contains protein, carbohydrates and vitamins. It is not possible to define it as a balanced meal, since we do not know the quantities of each type of food.

T A B L E 64

Type of main meal prepared by recipients,  
or supplied by others (excluding meals-on-wheels)

Type of main meal	Recipient prepared meal		Meal supplied by others	
	No.	%	No.	%
Protein + green vegetables + potatoes and/or bread and butter	105	29	67	32
As above, with fruit in addition or instead of green vegetables, plus soup or milk	85	23	53	25
Protein + vegetables or fruit or milk or soup	12	3	8	4
Protein + potatoes and/or bread and butter (no green vegetables or fruit)	139	38	60	29
Bread + butter/milk/potatoes/veg./soup (no protein)	19	5	17	8
Other meals with no protein, but either milk or fruit	4	2	3	1
Nothing to eat, drinks only	-	-	2	1
All recipients not getting meals-on-wheels	364	100	210	100

Where recipients prepare the meal for themselves, they are less inclined to bother about green vegetables or fruit, but even when the meal is supplied by someone else it is not as well balanced as that supplied by the meals-on-wheels service.

#### Whole day's meals

The British Dietetic Association Inc. and the National Old Peoples Welfare Council have issued a pamphlet which advises every older person to have the following kinds of foods:-

Protein	Twice a day
Potatoes	Daily
Green vegetables	Daily
Fruit	Daily
Bread and cereals	Daily
Fats	Daily
Milk - at least $\frac{1}{2}$ pint	Daily

Table 65 overleaf shows how many recipients conformed to this standard the day before interview as far as the kinds of food are concerned. It was not possible in this survey to obtain quantities, and milk has therefore been omitted from the data.

Less than 10% of recipients have meals conforming to standard on week-days when meals-on-wheels are not delivered, compared with just under 20% on Sundays and just under 30% on days meals-on-wheels are delivered. Half the recipients do not have potatoes, and over two-thirds do not have green vegetables on week-days when meals-on-wheels are not delivered.

T A B L E 65

## Deficiencies in day's meals the day before interview

Kind of food eaten day before interview	Meals-on-wheels not delivered				Days meals-on-wheels delivered	
	Week-days		Sundays			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Meals conforming to standard	37	8	24	20	71	28
No protein at all (apart from milk)	35	8	1	1	2	1
Protein once only	159	36	53	43	112	43
No potatoes	217	50	24	20	8	3
No green vegetables	294	66	36	29	35	14
No fruit	248	56	55	45	119	46
No carbohydrates	8	2	4	3	2	-
No fats	68	15	21	17	37	14
Number of recipients on which % based*	443		123		258	

\* Excludes 17 not answering

It is interesting to note that while 35 recipients say they did not have any green vegetables on a meals-on-wheels day (because either vegetables are not given as part of the meal, consisting of, say, fish and chips, or green vegetables are delivered but not eaten), 27 of these recipients substituted fruit or tomatoes on that day.

There is one further aspect of need which we should examine, that is, the social need supplied by the delivery of meals-on-wheels.

Does the delivery meet a social need?

All but 2 of the organisers regard the delivery of meals-on-wheels as a social, as well as a nutritional, service. Organisers say that not only are servers able to see whether recipients need help, and arrange for help to be given, but the regular visits, even if only on one day a week, give the recipient something to look forward to, and a sense of security. In many cases, especially where only one meal a week is served, organisers regard this aspect of the service as more important than the value of the meal itself. Many of the servers take a personal interest in the old people they visit, and some central London schemes arrange for their members, or girl guide troops, etc. to pick wild flowers in the spring, and deliver these with the meal.

There can be little doubt that most recipients do enjoy the social contact; many of the Social Survey investigators added notes to questionnaires to the effect that recipients had said how much they enjoyed seeing the "nice young ladies" who bring the meals. Not only do recipients feel someone is taking an interest in them; the recipients themselves, in many cases, get to know "their lady", and inquire anxiously if there are changes in personnel. On one occasion Lady Reading, Chairman of the W.V.S., was herself acting as a server, and was greeted by one gruff old gentleman with "You're five minutes late - and not the right one!"



### Other social contacts

Recipients were asked whether they had been visited by specific people, or groups of people, during the 7 days immediately preceding the day of interview, and on what days. They were also asked whether they had had visits from anyone else during that week.

The number of recipients visited by the specified groups of people is shown in table 66.

T A B L E 66

Visitors in the seven days preceding day of interview

Visited by:-	Recipients who are able to get out		Recipients who are housebound or bedfast		All recipients	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Home helps	156	39	231	53	387	46
Doctors	35	9	103	24	138	17
District Nurse	21	5	71	16	92	11
Religious bodies	35	9	79	18	114	14
Daughters	95	24	96	22	191	23
Sons	85	21	113	26	198	24
Grandchildren	42	10	56	13	98	12
Other relatives	109	27	170	39	279	33
Neighbours and friends	216	54	287	66	503	60
Welfare authorities	10	2	21	5	31	4
Others	15	4	47	11	62	7
No-one	42	10	15	3	57	7
Number of recipients answering on which %s are based	400		436		836	

"Other visitors" were tradesmen, children who run errands for the recipient, and paid domestic helpers. More than half the recipients who are housebound or bedfast have a home help, as do 44% of recipients who can get out. Nearly half the housebound and bedfast recipients had at least one visit from a doctor during the seven days preceding the interview. Neighbours and friends were the most frequent visitors. An equal number of recipients seem to have visits from sons and daughters, about one-quarter of recipients having visits from sons, and one-quarter from daughters. (This does not necessarily mean that sons and daughters pay equal numbers of visits, since the frequency of visit is not taken into account here.) Recipients who were able to get out had fewer visitors of all kinds than those who were bedfast or housebound. 7% of all recipients had no visitors at all in the seven days preceding interview, but of recipients who were bedfast or housebound, 3% had no visitors.

### Factors affecting types of visitors

Apart from home helps, daughters, welfare officials and other miscellaneous visitors, from whom men and women have roughly equal proportions of visitors, men have proportionately fewer visitors than women from all groups. We know, however, that a higher proportion of men are able to get out of the house (table 21), so that it would appear that these differences may be due to the degree of mobility rather than the sex of the recipient.

Visits by doctors and district nurses

Age has little bearing on the type of people visiting, except for visits by doctors and district nurses; the age distribution of recipients visited by doctors and district nurses is shown in table 67.

T A B L E 67

Visits by doctors and  
district nurses to various age-groups

Age Group	Recipients visited by				All Recipients
	Doctor		District Nurse		
	No.	%	No.	%	
Up to 69 years	33	25	19	14	131 = 100
70 - 74 years	15	8	15	8	179 = 100
75 - 79 years	34	17	20	10	204 = 100
80 - 84 years	34	16	20	10	208 = 100
85 and over	22	20	18	16	112 = 100
All age groups *	138	17	92	11	834* = 100

\* Excludes 19 not answering either visitors or age or both.

Number of days on which recipients have visitors

We have been concerned in the foregoing tables with the type of people visiting, not with the days on which they are visited. Table 68 shows the number of days recipients had at least one visitor in the seven days before the interview.

T A B L E 68

Number of days recipients had at least one visitor

Number of days on which recipients had at least one visitor	Proportion of recipients visited %
0	7
1	9
2	11
3	9
4	9
5	7
6	12
7	36
	817 - 100%

Nearly half the recipients had at least one visitor on six days before interview, and almost three-quarters of recipients had visitors on at least 3 days. The other half, however, had no visitors for at least two days a week with over one-quarter of the recipients having no visitors on at least 5 of the seven days. If we consider whether the visitor called during the weekend, we find that about 10% (including the 7% not having any visitors) do not have a visitor at all during Monday to Friday.

In these circumstances, the caller with the meals-on-wheels may mean a great deal to the recipient. There is little evidence, however, that the meals-on-wheels delivery leads to further visits for social purposes by other members of the organisation.

Visits by friends and neighbours

Nearly 60% of recipients had visits from friends and neighbours. 65% of female recipients had at least one visit from a friend or neighbour in the seven days immediately preceding interview, compared with 48% of male recipients. The proportions of recipients in the various age-groups having a visit from friends or neighbours were roughly the same.

There is another factor which might affect the number of friends and neighbours paying calls, and that is the length of time recipients have lived in the neighbourhood. All recipients were asked how long they had lived in their present accommodation, and if this was less than 10 years, a subsidiary question, asking if recipients had lived "round about here - say, within 15 minutes walk", was put. The length of time recipients had lived in the neighbourhood, that is, either in their present accommodation, or in accommodation not more than 15 minutes away, and whether they had friends and neighbours visiting is shown in table 69.

T A B L E    69  
How long lived in neighbourhood and  
whether friends and neighbours visit

Length of time living in neighbourhood	Recipients visited by friends and neighbours		All recipients
	No.	%	No.
Up to 2 years	32	52	62
2 - 5 years	57	54	106
5 - 10 years	62	61	102
10 - 20 years	108	64	168
20 years or more	241	59	411
All recipients visited by friends and neighbours	500	59	849    =    100%

53% of recipients who had lived in the neighbourhood for less than 5 years had visits from friends and relatives in the seven days preceding interview, compared with 61% living in the neighbourhood for 5-10 years, 64% living in the neighbourhood for 10-20 years and 59% living there for 20 years or more. There appears to be a very slight increase in the proportions visited relating to the number of years living in the neighbourhood.



Visits by children of recipients

We have seen from table 66 that nearly 25% of recipients had visits from sons and 25% had visits from daughters. However, we have seen, in table 30 that 46% of the recipients have no children living in a separate household, and it might be interesting to relate the number of children living away from recipients to the number of visits made, table 70.

T A B L E 70  
Number of days on which recipients have visitors,  
and number of children living away

Number of days in week preceding interview on which recipients have visitors	Number of children living away from parents (recipients)					All recip- ients  No.    %
	0	1	2 or 3	4 or more	All recip- ients with children not living with them	
	No.    %	No.    %	No.    %	No.    %	No.        %	
0	31    8	14   10	7    4	5    4	26       6	57    7
1	43   11	7    5	13   7	11   9	31       7	74    9
2	50   14	17   13	12   6	10   8	39       9	89   11
3	37   10	15   11	21   11	6    5	42       9	79    9
4	30    8	7    5	18   9	16   14	41       9	71    9
5	29    8	11   8	12   6	11   9	34       8	63    8
6	53   14	10   7	20   11	11   9	41       9	94   11
7	102   27	54   41	87   46	49   42	190      43	292   36
All recipients	375   100	135   100	190   100	119   100	444      100	819   100

It will be seen that 27% of recipients who have no children to visit them compared with 43% of recipients with such children, have at least one visitor a day. For recipients who do have children living away, the number of children does not appear to affect the number of days on which visits are made. It is possibly of interest to note that the proportion having no visitors differs little between recipients having children living away and recipients having no children living away.

The frequency of visits to parents might depend on how long it would take to make the journey. Recipients were asked, about each of their children not living with them, how long the journey would take from children's to parents' home, and how often each son or daughter visited. The answers to the questions are given in table 71 opposite.

Distance between parents' (recipients) and childrens' home and how often children visit

Distance between parents' and childrens' home	Sons' Visits					Daughters' Visits					Both sons' and daughters' visits				
	At least once a month, but not once a week	Less than once a month	Never	All Sons		At least once a month, but not once a week	Less than once a month	Never	All daughters		At least once a month, but not once a week	Less than once a month	Never	Both sons and daughters	
	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %		No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %		No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	
Up to 15 mins.	143 72	20 10	23 12	11 6	197 100	134 82	15 9	7 4	9 5	165 100	277 77	35 10	30 8	20 5	362 100
15 mins. to 1 hr.	79 38	58 29	51 25	16 8	204 100	94 48	36 18	50 26	16 8	196 100	173 43	94 24	101 25	32 8	400 100
Over 1 hour	10 6	24 14	114 66	24 14	172 100	9 5	21 12	118 65	33 18	181 100	19 5	45 13	232 66	57 16	353 100
Abroad	-	-	11 26	31 74	42 100	-	-	3 10	28 90	31 100	-	-	14 19	59 81	73 100
All distances	232 38	102 17	199 32	82 13	615 100	237 41	72 13	178 31	86 15	573 100	469 39	174 15	377 32	168 14	1188 100

77% of children living within 15 minutes travelling distance from parents' homes visit at least once a week, compared with 43% living 15 mins. - 1 hour away, and 5% where the journey would take over 1 hour. According to recipients, 32% of children visit less than once a month, while 14% of children never visit parents. Of 168 children who never visit parents, 20 (12%) live within 15 minutes travelling distance, 32 (19%) live between 15 mins. - 1 hour away, 57 (34%) live over 1 hour away, and 59 (35%) live abroad. Recipients say that more daughters than sons living up to 1 hour away come to see them.

It is sometimes suggested that children are more likely to visit a parent who is widowed, separated or divorced, than parents living together, but there is no evidence from the original data to support this. However, children are more inclined to visit mothers more often than fathers. 43% of children visit mothers compared with 31% visiting fathers, at least once a week, while 19% never visit fathers compared with 13% never visiting mothers.



## VII WHAT IS THE OVERALL DEMAND FOR MEALS-ON-WHEELS?

The meals-on-wheels service does not operate in all areas, and in order to assess the overall demand for the service, we need to consider, apart from any additional demand by present recipients,

1. Whether or not there is a need for the service in areas not covered by the present schemes.
2. Whether the whole need in the areas covered by schemes is being met.

### Why are some areas and not others covered by meals-on-wheels schemes?

We must therefore first consider whether areas with meals-on-wheels schemes differ from areas without them in respect of old age and mobility. For the purpose of this report, old people are defined as women 60 and over, and men 65 and over. In areas where meals-on-wheels are served, the ratio of older people to general population is 1:14.7 and in non-meals-on-wheels areas the ratio is 1:14.75. There is therefore no difference in this respect.

### Mobility of older people not having meals-on-wheels

At the same time as the survey of recipients was carried out, a random sample of older people not having meals-on-wheels was interviewed. These will, henceforth in this report, be referred to as "older people". The sampling method is described in Appendix A, but it should be noted here that the final sample was of older people not having meals-on-wheels. Table 72 shows the number of older people who say they can get as far as the shops in winter.

T A B L E 72

Whether older people not having meals-on-wheels  
can get to the shops in winter

Degree of mobility of older people not having meals-on-wheels	Areas where there is a meals-on- wheels service		Areas where there is no meals-on-wheels service				All areas	
	No.	%	URBAN		RURAL		No.	%
Can get to shops in winter	554	83	342	80	172	76	1068	81
Cannot get to shops, bedfast	7	1	7	2	6	3	20	2
Cannot get to shops, housebound	103	16	79	18	47	21	229	17
All older people not hav- ing meals-on-wheels	664	100	428	100	225	100	1317	100

There is no significant difference between the proportions of older people who can get to the shops in winter in areas where there is a meals-on-wheels service and areas where this is no service, thus the reason for areas having a meals-on-wheels service is not that more old people can't get out. Indeed, in rural areas where there is no meals-on-wheels service a slightly higher proportion of older people are less mobile than in areas having a service.



It would appear that there are some factors other than age and mobility which influence the setting-up of a meals-on-wheels service in given areas but not others. There is no reason to believe that the physical conditions stopping older people from getting meals for themselves, such as blindness, rheumatic and arthritic conditions, etc. are more common in some areas than others, and it would seem that most areas would have some older people who could not get meals for themselves.

Availability of Volunteers

The hypothesis that the setting-up of meals-on-wheels schemes in some areas and not others is related not solely to need, but to the existence of a voluntary body which can collect the necessary funds and volunteers, must be examined.

One would expect that the wealthier areas would have a larger number of people willing to do voluntary work, and hence would have a higher proportion of meals-on-wheels schemes than the poorer areas.

Areas in England and Wales with meals-on-wheels schemes were classified according to the J-index\*. (the higher the J-index the wealthier the area), and a comparison with all administrative districts of similar values is given in table 73.

T A B L E    73

Proportion of areas of different economic status  
having meals-on-wheels schemes compared with proportion of  
all administrative districts,    England and Wales

J-index (Economic status)	Areas with meals-on-wheels schemes		Distribution of Admin. Areas, England & Wales	
	No.	%	No.	%
0.00 - 0.69 (lowest)	14	3.7	109	7.4
0.70 - 1.69	54	14.2	265	18.1
1.70 - 2.99	61	16.1	338	23.1
3.00 - 4.99	75	19.8	304	20.7
5.00 - 8.99	85	22.4	297	20.3
9.00 + (highest)	90	23.8	152	10.4
All economic levels	379*	100	1465	100

\* Areas exclude Scotland, for which there is no comparable index of economic status, and ten meals-on-wheels areas where it was not possible to calculate the J-index.

The proportion of areas with the highest economic status covered by a meals-on-wheels scheme is more than twice as great as would have been expected from the distribution of Administrative Areas in England and Wales, and the proportion of schemes in areas with the lowest economic status is about half.

\* The proportion of Jurors as an index of the economic status of a district. Gray, P.G., Corlett, T., and Jones, P. Social Survey. London, 1951.

It would seem reasonable to assume from these data that the availability of volunteers is likely to play some part in deciding whether a meals-on-wheels service exists in any area in England and Wales. It is not possible to make a comparison of the economic status of areas in Scotland with meals-on-wheels schemes. In Scotland, a higher proportion of schemes are run by independent Old Peoples Welfare Committees which do not rely to such a great extent on voluntary labour - so it well might be that this conclusion does not hold for Scotland.

The availability of volunteers might also affect the number of recipients covered by schemes in England and Wales. In London, there are meals-on-wheels services operating in 25 of the 28 Metropolitan Boroughs. Table 74 shows the ratio of recipients to general population according to economic status of the Borough.

T A B L E    74

Ratio of recipients to general population by economic status of Metropolitan Boroughs of London as measured by the J-index

Economic status (J-index)	Number of recipients per 1000 population	Number of Metropolitan Boroughs of London	
		With service	No service
4.0 and over (highest)	0.87	6	-
3.0 - 3.9	0.69	9	-
2.0 - 2.9	0.40	5	3
Under 2 (lowest)	0.99	5	-
All indices	0.70	25	3

It will be seen that apart from the very poorest Boroughs, the number of recipients per 1000 population rises as the economic status of the Borough rises. This same pattern emerges when the whole of the London area is examined, which accounts for just over 21% of all recipients, and although it is not so clear-cut for other Regions, there is a general tendency for this to hold good for all standard Regions of England and Wales.

Does income level effect the need for meals-on-wheels?

Although a high income does not necessarily mean that the supply of meals is refused, it is possible that older people with a low income level might in fact have a greater need for the meal, since they would not be able to afford to pay someone to cook for them. Where they could cook for themselves if someone were to do the shopping, there is still a problem of shoppers not taking the trouble to "stretch" a low income by buying at the cheapest prices, or searching out bargains. A comparison between the incomes of recipients and of the sample of older people is given in table 75 opposite.

T A B L E 75

Income distribution of samples of  
meals-on-wheels recipients and all older people

Weekly income (grouped)	Single incomes		Joint incomes	
	Meals-on-wheels recipients %	Older people %	Meals-on-wheels recipients %	Older people %
Up to and including 54/-	21	45	} 15	} 19
55/- - 64/-	30	17		
65/- - 74/-	23	11		
75/- - 84/-	14	7		
85/- - 94/-	5	5		
95/- - 104/-	3	2	10	7
105/- - 114/-	} 4	} 13	25	13
115/- - 124/-			13	8
125/- - 134/-			12	7
135/- - 144/-			6	2
145/- - 164/-			5	4
165/- or more			7	12
			7	28
All income groups	669 = 100%	656 * = 100%	131 = 100%	477 * = 100%

\* Excludes 184 older people (14% of the sample) who could not or would not give income.

62% of the sample of "single" older people have an income of less than 65/- a week, compared with 50% of recipients. However, about 13% of the general sample have an income of over £5 a week, compared with about 4% of recipients. For joint incomes, the proportion having an income of under £5-5-0. is 39% in the general sample compared with 50% of recipients, with 28% with a joint income of £8-5-0. and over, compared with 7% of recipients.

From these distributions it could be concluded that while married recipients are drawn from the lower income levels, there is a much higher proportion of single older people in the very lowest income group (under 55/- a week) not getting meals.

Examining the source of income, we find that there is a much lower proportion of recipients with an earned income, as will be seen from table 76.



T A B L E 76

Sources of income of the two samples  
(recipients and all older people)

Sources of income *	Recipients sample		General sample	
	Number of people	%	Number of people	%
National Assistance	499	59	236	19
Retirement/old age pension	746	88	964	76
Other Government/official pensions	115	14	134	11
Private pensions	81	10	174	14
Wages	21	2	274	21
Rents	36	4	38	3
Shares, etc.	49	6	145	12
Charities	44	5	12	1
Other sources	11	1	23	2
Number of persons in sample on which % is based	850**	= 100	1256***	= 100

\* Informants may have income from more than one source.

\*\* Excludes 3 recipients not answering.

\*\*\* Excludes 61 older people not answering.

Nearly 60% of recipients are in receipt of National Assistance, while less than 20% of the older person's sample get help from this source. Excluding wage-earners from both samples, the proportions receiving income from the various sources are those shown in table 77.

T A B L E 77

Source of income of non wage-earners or spouses of  
non wage-earners from samples of  
recipients and all older people

Sources of income (excluding wages)*	Recipients	Older people
	%	%
National Assistance	60	22
Retirement/old age pension	90	91
Other Government/official pensions	14	13
Private pensions	10	16
Rents	4	4
Shares etc.	6	14
Charities	5	1
Other sources	1	2
Numbers of non wage-earners on which %s are based	829	1043

\* Informants may have income from more than one source.

This table suggests that old age pensioners on National Assistance are much more likely to get meals-on-wheels than other old age pensioners. Since there is a much higher proportion in the sample of older people with an income of less than 55/- a week not getting meals, we may conclude these people are better able to look after themselves, or are being helped by neighbours, relatives or friends, or they are not known to be in need. From table 18 it can be seen that 4% of recipients are brought to the notice of organisations serving meals by National Assistance officials, and over 60% of recipients were known to local Health and/or Welfare departments. It may

be that where help from these departments is given, the need for other help such as National Assistance and meals-on-wheels is greater, but the further possibility of need being found by one of the Health or Welfare services setting up a chain reaction whereby the other services are brought in cannot be excluded, and there well may be other older people not receiving meals who are in just as much need of the welfare services who are not known to the authorities.

Meals of older people not having meals-on-wheels

Older people not having meals-on-wheels were asked if they had at least one good meal a day, the same question as that put to recipients. 95% of the sample said they did get at least one good meal a day, compared with 62% of recipients (p.57). There is no significant difference between the proportions of men and women, or between the different age-groups, who say they have at least one good meal a day.

Details of food eaten the day before interview and the day before that were collected and analysed for this sample in the same way as the data collected from recipients, already described.

Day's meals for day before interview

How far the kind of food eaten by older people not having meals-on-wheels conforms to the standard of the British Dietetic Association, previously used in discussing recipients (p.60), is shown in table 78.

T A B L E 78

Day's meals of older people the day before interview

Kind of food eaten day before interview	Day before interview was			
	Week day		Sunday	
	Number	% based on 1,048 older people	Number	% based on 251 older people
Meals conforming to standard	241	23	114	45
No protein at all (apart from milk)	22	2	6	2
Protein once only	245	23	67	27
No potatoes	267	25	23	9
No green vegetables	409	39	27	11
No fruit	381	36	56	22
No bread	5	-	-	-
No fats	134	13	32	13
Number of older people on which % is based *	1048		251	

\* Excludes 18 older people not giving full details of day's meals.

On weekdays 23% of older people reach the recommended standard as far as types of food are concerned; nearly one-quarter of older people do not have any potatoes and over one-third do not have green vegetables, which may be taken as an indication that many older people do not have at least one cooked meal every day.

Men and women of all age groups have the same types of food on Sundays and on weekdays with the exception of proteins. 27% of older women have proteins only once a day on weekdays, compared with 15% of older men, while a higher proportion of men and women of 80 and over have protein once only on both Sundays and weekdays, than other age groups.

Main meal

Comparing the day's meals with the main meal of the 355 older people whose day's meals were up to standard, 353 had had a balanced main meal. Clearly it is the main meal which determines the quality of the whole day's food consumption, and table 79 shows the type of main meal eaten by the sample of older people not having meals-on-wheels.

T A B L E    79

          Type of main meal eaten by sample of  
older people not having meals-on-wheels  
          the day before interview

Type of main meal day before interview	Day before interview was			
	Weekday		Sunday	
	No.	%	No.	%
Protein + green veg. + pot. or b. & b or both	381	36	106	42
As above + fruit instead of, or in addition to to green veg., + soup or milk	392	38	122	49
Protein + veg. or fruit or soup or milk	34	3	1	-
Protein - no green veg. but potatoes/bread & butter or both	196	19	13	5
Bread, & either butter, milk, potatoes, vegetables, soup (no protein)	31	3	9	4
Other meals with no protein, but either milk or fruit	13	1	1	-
Nothing to eat, drinks only	2	-	-	-
All types of meals*	1049	100	252	100

\* Excludes 16 older people not giving details of food eaten

On Sundays, 91% of older people had a varied meal, and 9% had a meal deficient in proteins or vitamins. On weekdays 74% of this sample had a balanced meal, 19% of the main meals being deficient in vitamins and 4% in protein. Sex and age and total income had no effect on the type of main meal.

Social contact of older people not having meals-on-wheels

It will be remembered that organisers of meals-on-wheels schemes stressed the importance to recipients of the social contact made in delivering meals. It does not follow that delivering a meal-on-wheel is the best way of relieving loneliness; indeed, since the servers only spend a few minutes with recipients, a system of regular home visiting with the caller staying say half-an-hour, might meet such a need more adequately.

Lack of social contact should not, therefore, be considered as a ground for serving meals-on-wheels, and may not be strictly relevant to this enquiry. Nevertheless, it might be of some interest to note the following points:-



In the seven days before interview -

(a) Bedfast and Housebound older people

10% of older people who were bedridden or housefast had no visitors. This does not mean, of course, that they were completely isolated, since there may have been others living in the household.

23% of housebound or bedfast older people had visitors on  
1 or 2 days only;

48% of housebound or bedfast older people had visitors on  
6 or 7 days only.

(b) Older people living on own, or with spouse only

13% of older people living on own or with spouse only, had no visitors. 47% living on own, and 38% living with spouse only, had visits from friends or relatives.

(c) Age and Sex

Age and sex makes little difference to the types of people visiting, except that the proportions in each age group having visits from home-helps, doctors and district nurses rise with age. Of those 80 and over, 11% have a home help, 19% saw a doctor.

(d) Visits by friends and neighbours

The proportions of older people visited by friends and neighbours did not vary according to the length of time the older person had lived in the neighbourhood.

(e) Visits by children

There is no significant difference between the visiting habits of children to parents who are receiving meals and older people generally (see table 71 ff.)

How many older people need meals-on-wheels?

The number of recipients at the time of the survey was 20,595, not all of whom were getting meals during the survey week, since some of the services were not operating.

It is not possible to calculate, for areas where there are meals-on-wheels services, the proportion of older people covered by schemes, since schemes may operate in part only of an administrative district. On the basis that wherever there is a meals-on-wheels scheme operating in an administrative district all older people needing the service in that area have the opportunity of being served with meals-on-wheels, the proportion of those of retirement age among the general population is roughly the same as for districts where services do not operate. We can assume, therefore, that areas where there are meals-on-wheels schemes operating do not differ significantly from the whole of Great Britain in so far as the proportion of old people in the general population is concerned.

If we assume that the proportion of all old people needing meals-on-wheels should be the same as the proportion actually served in areas where schemes operate, it can be calculated that the number of additional recipients in areas not covered is a minimum of 17,500, making a total of about 38,000 recipients, an increase of 85%.

### Number of meals

The average number of meals per week served to recipients is 1.93. We have, however, seen that some recipients would like more meals a week, the average number of meals per week desired being 3.16 (table 55), so that the number of meals per week needed by the 38,000 old people would be approximately 120,000 per week.

Again, there is no reason to believe that recipients do not need meals all the year round, say 50 weeks, making a yearly total of 6,000,000 required by the 38,000 old people. This compares with an estimated yearly total at the present (calculated from table 15) of 1,250,000, an increase of 380%. This increase to almost twice as many recipients, and over 4 times the number of meals must be regarded as a minimum increase since we know that meals-on-wheels services do not necessarily cover the whole of the administrative districts in which they operate, and there are several indications in the data collected from the sample of elderly people not getting meals-on-wheels, that the total need is not being met in these areas. 4% of elderly people say the person who does most of the cooking is not a member of the household nearly 2% having to rely on neighbours or friends to bring in a meal, and it has been shown in table 65 that meals supplied by persons outside the household to recipients of meals-on-wheels are not as well-balanced as those supplied by the meals-on-wheels service.

Again, of the 65 persons (5%) saying that they don't have at least one good cooked meal a day, 39 (over 3% of the total sample) give as reasons that either they can't afford or can't cook a good meal at least once a day.

As regards cooking appliances, 2% of this sample had only oil-stoves or gas/electric rings, while a further 10% had solid fuel stoves, which may be troublesome to elderly people who have difficulty in carrying solid fuel. Nearly 2% of the gas and electric cookers are situated in kitchens which the elderly person shares with another household.

Perhaps the strongest indication that some elderly people are not having proper meals is given by an examination of the type of main meal eaten on the two days immediately preceding interview. Since we know that on Sundays people have better meals than on other days, where either of the two days immediately preceding interview was a Sunday, these cases have been omitted. 747 older people were interviewed on Wednesday - Sunday, thus giving details of food for two consecutive weekdays, and type of main meal is analysed in table 80 below.

Thus, assuming at least one varied meal every other day is needed, some 13% of the elderly population did not have sufficient nutriment on 2 consecutive weekdays prior to interview.

If it is considered important that elderly people have at least one varied meal every other day, then it could be assumed that an additional 12%, amounting to 875,000 elderly people, (adjusting the figures for those who would presumably have been catered for if meals-on-wheels services operated in all areas), would need some form of help, though not necessarily meals-on-wheels.



T A B L E 80

Combination of main meals eaten by elderly people  
on the two consecutive days before interview,  
where both days were weekdays

Combination of 2 consecutive days main meals	Sample of elderly people	
	No.	%
Varied meal both days	469	62
One day varied, one lacked vegetables/fruit	134	18
One day varied, one lacked protein	22	3
One day varied, one lacked carbohydrates	23	3
One day lack proteins, one lacked vegetables	15	2
One day lack proteins, one lacked carbohydrates	1	-
One day lack vegetables, etc. one lacked carbohydrates	6	1
Both days lacked vegetables/fruit	66	9
Both days lacked proteins	6	1
Both days lacked carbohydrates	5	1
All combinations of 2 consecutive days main meals (weekdays)	747	100

Examining the 99 cases where the main meal is sub-standard on two consecutive weekdays for factors which might make them eligible for meals-on-wheels, the estimated number of older people needing this service would be as follows:-

Sub-standard meals on 2 consecutive weekdays and	Number of persons	Estimated No. in retirement population	Estimated standard error*
i) housebound	23	224,000	46,000
ii) housebound, living alone or with spouse only	5	49,000	22,000
iii) housebound, aged 75 or over	12	117,000	34,000
iv) housebound, aged 80 or over	10	98,000	31,000
v) aged 80 or over	23	224,000	46,000
vi) aged 80 or over, living alone or with spouse	8	78,000	27,000
vii) having services of home help	7	68,000	26,000

\* The Standard Error is very big due to the very small numbers on which estimates are based.

On these bases, the number of older people needing meals-on-wheels, in addition to the need already discussed, is likely to be not less than 25,000 and not more than 270,000, giving a minimum of 62,000 older persons needing the service, about 1.4 per thousand general population.



### Are older people prepared to accept meals-on-wheels?

177 of the older people in the sample knew someone who had had, or was having, meals-on-wheels. Asked what these recipients thought of the scheme, 72% said the recipients they knew thought it was a good scheme, 22% did not know and 6% said the recipients were critical of the scheme.

Older people not knowing about meals-on-wheels scheme were told, very briefly, that this was a scheme through which old people who could not get a hot meal were supplied with one at the cost of about 1/- or 1/3d., and asked what they thought of the idea. Of those giving an opinion over 99% thought it was a good scheme; only 7 informants (less than 1%) did not think it was a good idea. Men and women gave similar opinions.

Nevertheless, asked if they themselves would avail themselves of this service if they couldn't get a hot meal, 65% said they certainly would do so (73% of men and 62% of women); 9% would have meals if needed but were not keen on the idea, and 24% (20% of men and 26% of women) said they would not themselves accept meals-on-wheels; 2% did not know if they would take them. Of those who thought the scheme was a good one, 22% said they would not themselves accept meals-on-wheels.

### Would older people use luncheon clubs?

In some areas there are old peoples luncheon clubs, where an older person can obtain a meal for about 1/- or 1/3d. 95% of the old peoples sample thought this was a good idea, 2% did not know, and 2% did not think this was a good scheme. Again, asked if they themselves would use such luncheon clubs, 66% of the sample (proportions for men and women being similar) would, and 34% would not, use luncheon clubs. About one-quarter of the older people not willing to go to a club for a meal said they preferred to be independent, or were too proud to accept the service, and another quarter were too shy. About 12% thought that physical disability or health would prevent their getting to these clubs regularly. 6 older people (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ %) said they could not afford the meals, and 24 (nearly 6% of those who would not use luncheon clubs) said they found old people depressing or did not like them. The remainder gave vague reasons.

### Would older people use vouchers to get meals at cafes/restaurants

In a very few areas there is a scheme whereby older people can buy vouchers for say 1/- or 1/3d. and exchange these for meals at certain cafes or restaurants. Here again older people were asked for an opinion of this scheme, and 87% of the sample thought this was a good idea, 8% did not like the scheme, and 5% did not have an opinion.

Asked if they would use vouchers of this kind, 69% of informants said they would, 9% were doubtful, and 22% would not use the scheme. There is tendency for more men to say they would use the scheme than women (73% of men and 67% of women). The reasons given for not wanting to use vouchers were similar to those for not using luncheon clubs, except that only 10% of those not prepared to use this service said they were too shy, (the reason given by nearly 25% not wanting to use old peoples' luncheon clubs), and 14% said they disliked cafes.

### All three types of meals service

A summary of the proportions of older people saying they would make use of the three different schemes for providing meals is given in table 81 below.

T A B L E 81

Proportion of older people who say  
they would use the three meals services

Type of meals service	% of older people who would use
Meals-on-wheels	74
Luncheon clubs	66
Voucher schemes	69
Number of older people on which % based	1264*

\* Excludes 47 who were not asked (proxy inter-views) and 6 not answering.

Age, sex and region have little effect on the proportions of older people thinking the three methods of supplying meals are good. As far as making use personally of the three methods is concerned, age does not effect the proportions who say they would use any of the services, but more men than women tend to say they would avail themselves of the meals-on-wheels service and voucher scheme. Just over one-half of the sample said they would use all three types of meals service, and 9% said they would not use any, while a further 3% doubted whether they would make use of any of the services.

There is one factor which it was felt might have some effect on whether or not use would be made of any of the meals services, namely, social status. A system of classifying people into five main social class groups on the basis of occupation has been devised by the Registrar-General's Department\*, and is used as a basis for many studies where social status is thought to be important. The five main groups can be briefly defined as follows:-

- I - Professional and Administrative.
- II - Minor professional, managerial, executive.
- III - Skilled manual workers, including foremen and most clerical workers.
- IV - Semi-skilled manual workers and shop assistants, etc.
- V - Unskilled workers (excluding clerical).

For the purpose of this survey, where one would expect a high proportion of informants to be retired, the social class of men was based on occupation at the time of retirement, unless they had taken less skilled positions on compulsory retirement, etc. when occupation immediately preceding this "retirement" was taken. Single women were classified in the same way, but married women were classified on the basis of their husbands' occupation, unless they had been widowed or separated a long period and had themselves returned or continued to work after separation.

The proportion of the older peoples' sample in each of the 5 main categories is given in table 82 below.

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\* Classification of Occupations - Census 1951 - General Register Office, H.M.S.O.



T A B L E    82  
Social class of older people

Registrar-General social class	Older people's sample	
	No.	%
I	58	4
II	223	18
III	659	53
IV	147	12
V	136	11
Never worked	23	2
All giving information	1246	100

#### Effect of social class on demand for meals

There are roughly equal proportions in all social classes saying the idea of meals-on-wheels and the voucher scheme is good, but there is a tendency for fewer older people in social classes I and II to think it is a good idea to have luncheon clubs compared with other social classes, although the numbers in each group are too small to show a significant difference; 89% in Class I, 93% in Class II, and 96% in other classes think luncheon clubs a good scheme.

When it comes to accepting meals personally, it is clear that social status does effect the proportions who would avail themselves of the three services, as will be seen from table 83.

T A B L E    83  
Proportions in social classes willing to accept meals

R.G's Social Class	% of older people willing to accept meals using			Number of old people on which % is based
	Meals-on-wheels service	Old peoples luncheon club	Voucher scheme	
	%	%	%	
I & II	69	49	63	281
III	75	70	70	659
IV & V	78	76	75	283
All classes	74	66	69	1223

The meals-on-wheels service would be acceptable to more older people than either the old peoples' luncheon club or the voucher scheme. Over three-quarters of older people in social classes IV and V say they would use the three services and there is little difference in the proportions preferring one type of meals provision to another. Three-quarters of those in social class III would accept meals-on-wheels, and 70% would use lunch clubs or vouchers.

Just under half the older people in social classes I and II say they would use an old person's luncheon club, compared with 70% in class III or 76% in classes IV & V.

In considering what the immediate demand on the meals-on-wheels service might be, the fact that some 25% of needy older folk are likely to refuse the service must be taken into consideration.



VIII CAN THE PRESENT SERVICE BE EXTENDED  
TO COPE WITH POSSIBLE DEMAND

People engaged in the present meals-on-wheels service

The total number of people engaged in the meals-on-wheels service in the survey week, and the hours worked in the 448 schemes run by voluntary organisations, are shown in table 84.

T A B L E 84

Number of workers engaged and hours worked in meals-on-wheels schemes run by voluntary organisations in survey week

Organisation responsible for scheme	Total number of people engaged in service in survey week *	Total number of hours in survey week	Average hours per person in survey week
W.V.S.	3388	7567	2.23
O.P.W.C.	361	937	2.60
Red Cross	82	314	3.83
W.V.S. & O.P.W.C.	263	710	2.70
All schemes run by voluntary organisations	4094	9528	2.33

\* Adjusted to include averages for 10 schemes not answering

The table excludes people engaged in the preparation of meals which were obtained ready-cooked from school meals services, restaurants, etc., or for drivers, etc. loaned by the local authorities, for which no assessment of time spent could be made.

The average time spent by each person engaged in the service was just over 2 hours 20 mins. In the schemes run by the W.V.S. the average time per person was just under 2 hours 10 min., compared with approx. 2 hrs. 35 mins. and 3 hrs. 50 mins. in schemes for which the O.P.W.C. and the Red Cross was responsible. This difference is probably accounted for by the fact that 84% of W.V.S. schemes are run completely on voluntary labour, compared with 40% O.P.W.C., and 44% of Red Cross schemes. The proportions of time given voluntarily and time for which payment was made by the organisations is given in table 85 below.

T A B L E 85

Proportions of time given voluntarily and time for which payment was made in schemes run by voluntary organisations

Organisation responsible	Voluntary time	Paid time	Total Hours on which % based
	%	%	No. %
W.V.S.	94	6	7,567 = 100
O.P.W.C.	61	39	937 = 100
Red Cross	55	45	314 = 100
W.V.S. & O.P.W.C.	90	10	710 = 100
All schemes run by voluntary organisation	89	11	9,528 = 100

Thus nearly 90% of the time spent was voluntary, the highest proportion of voluntary labour being given by members of the W.V.S. 6% of time spent in W.V.S. schemes was paid for, compared with 39% in O.P.W.C. and 45% in Red Cross schemes.

#### Difficulties maintaining present service

About one-third of the schemes are not able to function every week of the year because of difficulties in obtaining or of delivering the meal (p.14). We have already discussed the source of the meal in this connection, and table 86 shows the number of schemes finding it difficult to maintain the present service due to lack of volunteers or transport facilities.

T A B L E 86

#### Difficulties in maintaining present service

Type of difficulty	Schemes	
	No.	%
No difficulty with either volunteers or transport	237	53
No difficulty with volunteers - but difficulty with transport	25	6
No difficulty with transport, but difficulty with volunteers	141	31
Difficulty with both volunteers and transport	45	10
All schemes (excluding L.A.)	448	100

Nearly 40% of schemes have difficulty in maintaining the present service due to lack of personnel. The most frequent reason given by organisers for finding it hard to maintain the service is the lack of volunteers able to drive, or volunteers with their own cars. The next most frequent reason was that members have lunch-time commitments, while 14 organisers say that meals-on-wheels helpers need to be young and strong, and in some areas it is particularly difficult to recruit women of this type, as younger women tend to take up paid employment. 49 organisers say they have difficulty in recruiting volunteers of all types.

Extending present service

Organisers were asked if they could extend the service with the personnel and equipment available at the time of the survey and the replies are given in table 87.

T A B L E    87

Schemes which could extend service with present  
personnel and transport facilities

Whether service could be extended	With present personnel		With present transport facilities	
	Number of schemes	%	Number of schemes	%
Could not extend service	205	46	170	38
Could operate on more days	69	15	116	26
Not more days, but serve more meals/recipients	174	39	162	36
All schemes (excluding L.A.)	448	100	448	100

Nearly half the organisers say that personnel difficulty would prevent an extension of the present service, 39% of the schemes could not operate on more days due to lack of helpers, while 38% could not extend the service because of transport difficulties, and 36% could not operate on more days. When asked if they could double the number of meals or recipients served if the need arose, 15% of organisers said they could do this, while 44% said this could not be done due to transport difficulties, 6% because of lack of personnel, and 35% due to both transport and personnel difficulties. Given sufficient transport facilities, 59% of organisers think they could double the service. This is apparently inconsistent with organisers' statement about extending service. Some of the organisers say however that although this would be difficult, the organisation has never yet failed to provide a service that was necessary.

Nonetheless, it would seem that the possibility of voluntary organisations being so expanded as to meet the full demands of all older people in need of meals-on-wheels is doubtful since the number of meals needed would be a minimum of 4 times the number at present served. The demand for the service is likely to be greater as the proportion of older people in the general population increases, and it is possible that the number of voluntary workers will decrease, since younger women are more inclined to take up, or continue in, paid employment.

Can the Meals-on-Wheels Service be reorganised to cover the increasing demand?

Under the National Assistance Act 1948 (Section 31), local authorities are permitted to give funds to voluntary organisations delivering meals-on-wheels. 394 (84%) of the schemes get some sort of help from local or county authorities. 45 schemes do not get help but have never applied, since the organisers say they have not needed it so far, although 2 of these schemes will be applying for help in the coming year. 3 Local Authorities had the question of giving aid under consideration at the time of the survey, and 5 had refused to help.

The amount and kind of help given varies considerably. In 5 schemes, the aid is confined to supplying a driver to help in delivery. One County



Council pays all mileage incurred by private cars in delivery. Some local authorities subsidize the meal, subsidies ranging from 1d. a meal to 1/4d. a meal. In the London area it is not uncommon to have the local Council and the L.C.C. sharing the subsidy. Sometimes the subsidy is paid direct to the suppliers of meals while in others, the organisation submits a claim based on the number of meals served.

Some Authorities give a cash grant, to be used at the discretion of the organiser. Again, there is great variation, one scheme serving 46 recipients a week had a grant of £26 for the year, while another, serving 10 meals a week, had a grant of £50. One scheme serving 170 people 1 meal a week had a grant of £300 for a subsidy on meals, plus £457 for a new van, £100 for containers, and £300 for the maintenance etc. of 2 vans. The biggest grant was to a scheme serving 273 recipients with 2 meals a week, where a city council gave a grant of approx. £2,000 for the year.

It would seem that most Local Authorities are prepared to give some aid to meals-on-wheels schemes, in some few cases bearing the full cost, other than voluntary labour, while others make almost a token payment. Since one of the main difficulties in both maintaining and extending the service is that of transport, it might be in this particular field that Local Authorities should help most.

Home Helps

A suggestion has been made that instead of delivering meals-on-wheels, the home help should cook for recipients. Whether this would be a reasonable substitute would depend, among other things, on the number of days on which the home help's services are available to recipients. Table 88 shows the number of days a week on which recipients have the services of a home help.

T A B L E    88

Number of days a week recipients  
have the services of a home help

Number of days a week	Recipients %
0	55
1	14
2	15
3	7
4 or more	9
All recipients	849 = 100%

55% of recipients do not have a home help, 14% have a home help on only one day a week, and a further 15% on two days a week. It would appear that unless the home helps were to attend many more recipients on many more days a week, and spend longer with each recipient, it would not be possible to substitute meals cooked by the home helps for meals-on-wheels.

Conclusions

The Governors of The National Corporation for the Care of Old People have asked that at the completion of the investigation some suggestions should be made about the future of the meals-on-wheels service and the possibilities of expansion. These are given below but it should be made clear that they express the opinion of the author alone and were formed during the course of the two years of investigation.

### Making the best use of voluntary labour

The amount of time spent on each meal served averages 35 mins. Where the meal is obtained ready-cooked, the average time per meal is 33 minutes, and where cooked by members it is 40 minutes. Assuming that volunteers engaged in shopping preparing, cooking and cleaning up kitchens could also carry out the delivery, the number of meals which could be served by schemes where members cook meals could be increased by some 17% without any increase in personnel, if the meal were to be obtained ready-cooked. This assumption may not be correct, however, since members may be able to do cooking, but not the more strenuous job of carrying meals up flights of tenement stairs, etc.

A possible way of meeting the full demand would be for Local Authorities to take responsibility for administering the scheme, arranging for the supply of a meal suitable for old people, supplying drivers and transport, and garaging and maintaining vans. In those areas where private cars are the most useful form of transport, it might be the case that local authorities, paying mileage rates, could recruit from a wider field than the present organisations.

The voluntary organisations could then devote their resources to delivering and serving the meals, maintaining the personal interest and social contact. Perhaps these volunteers could be augmented by members of youth organisations during school holidays or week-ends, when members find it most difficult to serve.

The main difficulty, however, might be, not to meet the needs, but to find the older people who are in need, and persuade them to avail themselves of the service.

At present there is no simple way of knowing where older people are, let alone whether they are in need of welfare services. On particular occasions, for example during Coronation year, some areas attempted to get a complete record of old people to whom gift parcels could be sent. During the survey, investigators came across an individual doctor who had a special list of older people on his register who might need special services, and a clergyman who had a similar list for his parish. But this information is not collected in any systematic way.

It might be considered desirable to publicise more widely the fact that a meals-on-wheels service is available for older people in need. In areas where there is a meals-on-wheels scheme, half the older people in the sample interviewed said they didn't know whether there was a scheme operating in that area.

We know that people are not always ready and willing to take advantage of schemes operating in their own interests. Sometimes special national campaigns have to be initiated, such as those which ask mothers to have babies immunized against diphtheria, or to take welfare foods, or young people to have polio injections. It is important that older people who need the meals-on-wheels service be persuaded to accept it, and it says much for the efforts of the voluntary organisations that so many old people accepted the service in the first place, and now speak so highly of both the meal and the servers.

At the same time, it may be that publicizing the service might result in an initial demand greater than anticipated, as was the demand for spectacles and dental treatment when the National Health Scheme was inaugurated.

The voluntary organisations have laid the foundations of a very worthwhile service, and have brought aid and comfort to many thousands of old people, that section of the community which is possibly in most need of help. While acknowledging the work of the volunteers cooking, often with inadequate equipment in inconvenient premises, and delivering in all sorts of



weather, the efforts of the regional and national staff should not be overlooked. They are constantly looking for ways to improve the service, from redesigning the containers to persuading British firms to manufacture charcoal briquettes at present obtained abroad.

The co-operation of the voluntary organisations in carrying out this survey is greatly appreciated, and the author would especially like to thank the Dowager Lady Reading, Chairman of the W.V.S., Mrs. Carroll-Marx and Mrs. Anne Thompson of W.V.S. headquarters London; Miss M. Bucke, secretary of the National Old Peoples Welfare Council; Miss C.M. Wyatt O.B.E., of the British Red Cross Society; and in Scotland, Lady MacColl, Chairman of the Scottish W.V.S. and Miss M.E.D. Stein, Secretary of the Scottish Old People's Welfare Committee.



## HOW DO OLDER PEOPLE MANAGE ABOUT MEALS?

The NATIONAL CORPORATION FOR THE CARE OF OLD PEOPLE are concerned about how older people manage for meals. There are a number of older people who, because of failing health, which keeps them indoors, cannot do their own shopping or cooking, and find it impossible to get relations, neighbours, and friends to help them to get nourishing meals.

At present National Voluntary Organisations and some local organisations run a service, usually with the help of Local Authorities, which supplies such older people with hot meals delivered to them in their own homes. They also run clubs where a good meal can be obtained very cheaply. These services, however, are not available in all districts, and the only way to find out how many people need this service, or might need it in the future, is to ask older people how they manage now, and what arrangements they would make if they could not get meals for themselves.

We want to know about all older people, not only those who need help, but those who are able to manage for themselves. It would be impossible to call on every person over 60 so we have selected a number of addresses. Yours happens to be one of these.

The information you have given us will be treated as strictly confidential, no names will be mentioned or given, either in the final report, or to any other person.

There is no compulsion to take part in this, but its value does depend on the willing help of all the people we approach. Thank you very much for the help you have given.

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THE SOCIAL SURVEY  
MONTAGU MANSIONS,  
YORK STREET, BAKER STREET, W.1.

THE SOCIAL SURVEYDOMICILIARY FEEDING OF OLDER PEOPLEPURPOSE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this stage is to get an idea of what is involved in organising and running the service, and any particular difficulties and views you might have in your particular centre.

Although in general the questionnaire will be completed by the organiser of each local meals-on-wheels service, the comments of all your helpers will be valuable in giving us a complete picture.

NOTES TO HELP YOU IN COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Where the answer to a question is "Yes" or "No", please indicate which one applies by ringing the letter or number opposite the "Yes" or "No".
2. Where the questions have been pre-coded, i.e. the possible answers are listed and a code number or letter attached, (e.g. questions 18, 28) - indicate the answer by ringing the code of the answer that applies.
3. Ignore the small boxes placed alongside some questions; these are to be used in analysis here.
4. If you find that you need more room for any question, please continue on the back page, writing in the number of the qn. to which the continuation applies.
5. If you are unable to record an answer to any question because the details are not available, please DO NOT LEAVE A BLANK, but record "don't know", "no records", etc.
6. Please return the questionnaire direct to the Social Survey as soon as possible after completion.
7. If in any difficulty, please contact the Social Survey. Spare labels are enclosed, or you could telephone

WELbeck 4420, Ext. 66 (Miss Harris or Mr. Stuart)

- (i) Organisation responsible for this service
- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| W.V.S. ...    | 1 |
| O.P.W.C. ...  | 2 |
| Red Cross ... | 3 |
- Other organisation (state which)

- (ii) Area, town or district covered by this service.

SECTION I - EXTENT OF SERVICE

1. How many meals did your service supply to people in their own homes during week June 23rd - 29th inclusive?

Number of  
Meals  
Supplied

Monday ...	...	...	...
Tuesday ...	...	...	...
Wednesday ...	...	...	...
Thursday ...	...	...	...
Friday ...	...	...	...
Saturday ...	...	...	...
Sunday ...	...	...	...

2. How many people received?

Number of  
Persons

1 meal only ...	...	...
2 meals only ...	...	...
3 meals only ...	...	...
4 meals only ...	...	...
5 meals only ...	...	...
6 meals only ...	...	...
7 meals only ...	...	...

3. Would you say this is a fairly typical week as far as number of meals served is concerned?

Yes ... Y  
No ... X

If No, in what way is it different?

4. Do you think any of the recipients would benefit from more meals per week than you are able to supply at present?

Yes ... 6  
No ... 7

If Yes, what prevents you giving more?

5. Has any person not taken as many meals as you could have supplied this week?

Yes ... Y  
No ... X

If Yes

- i) How many persons
- ii) What where the reasons for their not taking as many as you could provide? (Give number of people for each reason)

6. If less than 4 meals per person per week

If it were possible to supply twice as many meals, would you double the number given to present recipients, or would you give the present number of meals to twice the number of people?

Give present recipients more .... 1  
Take on new recipients ..... 2

COMMENTS

7. Have you a waiting list, or do you actually know of old people needing meals which you cannot supply with your present resources?

Waiting list of people (giving number)  
Actual know of people (giving number)  
No list or person actually known ... 0



8. Apart from any list or people known to you, do you think there are old people in this area who need meals-on-wheels?

Yes ... Y  
No ... X

If Yes, if you could extend the service, how would you find out who they are?

9. Do you supply any people with special diets?

Yes ... A  
No ... O

If "Yes", how many people .....

If "No", have you had to refuse or stop the supply to people on special diets?

Yes ... Y  
No ... X

If refused or stopped, give numbers or reasons

10. Does your service operate all the year round, or are there some weeks when you stop delivery?

Operates all year ... X  
Stop some weeks ..... O

If stops, give periods and reasons:

Period (Time of year)	Reason
--------------------------	--------

11. Do you find there is less demand for meals in the summer than in the winter months?

Yes ... Y  
No ... O

If Yes, why is this?

SECTION II - WHO GETS MEALS?

12. Who, or what organisation, recommended the recipients you have at present on your list?

	Number of Persons	OFF. USE
Hospital Almoners ....		Y
National Assistance Board ....		X
L.A. Health Department.....	1	
L.A. Welfare Department.....	2	
Home help/ Organiser.....	3	
Old People's Welfare Department.....	4	
Doctors.....	5	
Blind Society.....	6	
Clergy.....	7	
Neighbours, friends, relatives.....	8	
Others (specify).....	9	

13. Does one of your own members investigate every case to establish need, or do you accept certain cases without investigation because of the status of the recommending body?

Investigate every case..... Y  
Accept some cases without investigating..... X

If any accepted without investigation:

Which recommending bodies in Qn.12 would you accept without investigation?

14. How many of your present recipients are not older people - but are men under 65 or women under 60?

15. What circumstances do you consider makes a person eligible for meals-on-wheels?

16. What steps do you take to review the need to continue supply to each person on your list?

17. How many people have you stopped supplying in the last 6 months as a result of re-assessment of needs?

No. of persons stopped

18. Is there a Dining or Luncheon Club for old people in the area covered by your M.O.W. service?

Yes ... Y  
No ... 0

If Yes,

Do any people at present getting M.O.W. also use the Luncheon Club?

Yes,                                  opersons

No.....0

If No,

If there were a luncheon club, how many people at present getting M.O.W. could manage to use it?

Number could use .....

None could use .....0

### SECTION III - THE MEAL

19. Do you cook your own meals, or obtain them from an outside source?

Cooked in members own homes.....1

Cooked in organisation's kitchen.....2

Supplied by School Meals Service.....3

Supplied from Town Hall canteen/kitchen.4

Supplied from industrial canteen.....5

Supplied from private restaurant/cafe...6

Supplied from other source,  
namely:-

20. (a) If do not do own cooking:

i) How much does the meal cost? ..s. ..d.

ii) How much does the old person pay?.....

iii) Who makes up the difference?.....

iv) Are you able to make suggestions for alterations in the menu?

Yes ... Y  
No ... X

(b) If own cooking:

i) What do you estimate was the average cost per meal for the week - taking into account:

a) cost of food

b) fuel (average cost per week)

c) rent of premises

d) cost of paid labour (if any) in preparing and cooking meal only

s.                                  d.

ii) How much does the old person pay?.....

iii) Who makes up the difference?

21. Do you think the meals are, on the whole the most suitable for old people?

Yes ... Y  
No ... X

22. What food was served for each of the meals for this week?

Example      Braised beef/Boiled potatoes  
                 Boiled carrots/Treacle pudding

Monday

Tuesday

Weds.

Thurs.

Fri.

Sat.

Sun.

OFF.

USE

23. Are there any improvements or changes you would like to make with regard to cooking or source of supply and type of meal, and if so, what stops you doing this?

No improvements ... 0

Improvement  
or Change

What stops you

SECTION IV - DELIVERING THE MEAL

24. i) What time is the first meal delivered?  
ii) What time is the last meal delivered?

25. How was the meal kept hot? (State type of container used)

26. How long do your helpers spend with the recipient when delivering?

mins.

27. Apart from delivering the meals, do you feel the visit helps in any other way?

Yes ... Y  
No ... X

If Yes, in what way?

Y	X	0
1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

GO ON TO Qn 28 at top of next col.

30. Present Organisation

How many hours were spent in connection with the Meals-on-Wheels service during the week, both voluntary and paid workers?

Exclude persons paid by L.A., outside firms, etc. Include Helpers and "pairs of hands" from order voluntary organisations.

Total No. of Hours Last Week

Voluntary                      Paid

- Preparation a) Shopping, cooking, preparing food  
b) Pre-heating hotlocks etc., going to collect meals

Delivery to consumer

Clearing up (washing-up, cleaning, etc.)

Administration (clerical work, accounts, etc.)

Any other time spent (state purpose)

Note: If a voluntary worker did other duties apart from M.O.W. only an estimate of hours spent on M.O.W. should be included.

28. Are there any changes you would like to make with regard to the time of delivery and serving of meals?

Yes ... Y  
No ... X

If Yes a) What changes?

b) What extra help would you need?

SECTION V - PERSONNEL

29. How many people were engaged in connection with the M.O.W. service during the weeks in question?

a) Were any of these members of another voluntary organisation?

No.....0  
W.V.S.....1  
Red Cross.....2  
O.P.W.C.....3  
Others (state which)....4  
.....

OFF. USE



Was any of this labour paid for by your organisation?  
Yes ... Y  
No .... X

If Yes, who and how much?  
Payment last week  
Cook ... .. £.....s.  
Driver ... .. £.....s.  
Cleaners, washers-up ... .. £.....s.  
Other helpers (state job). £.....s.  
  
Is any of your present man-power paid for by an outside organisation, (e.g. L.A. driver, etc.)  
Yes ... Y  
No ... X

If Yes, for what purpose, and who pays?  
  
Do you have any difficulty in getting enough volunteers to maintain the present service?  
Difficulty in getting volunteers.....X  
No difficulty.....0  
  
If any difficulty, give details:

34. With your present man-power position, could you serve more meals, or more recipients, or operate on more days? How many?  
  
Could not extend service .... 0  
  
Could serve more meals  
  
Could serve more recipients  
  
Could operate on more days  
  
35. If you were called upon to double the number of recipients, do you think you could get enough volunteers to cope?  
  
Could get enough volunteers.....Y  
Could not get enough volunteers...0

SECTION VI - TRANSPORT

36. What vehicles are used in delivering meals?  
  
Private cars ... .. 1  
Special van used for M.O.W. only . ... 2  
Van used for M.O.W. and other purposes.. 3  
Other form of transport (say what) ..... 4  
... ..

a) If private cars:  
  
Is payment made for petrol and/or mileage covered?  
Yes ... 1  
No ... 0

Not to be answered by W.V.S.  
  
If Yes (i) Give average weekly payment:  
£....s.....d.

(ii) Is this payment met in full or part by the Local Authority?  
  
Local Authority meets full cost ... ..  
  
Local Authority pay part ... £.....s.  
  
Local Authority does not meet any cost.

W.V.S. only  
  
If payment for mileage made, who pays?  
.....  
.....

b) If Vans:  
  
Who provided the vehicle?  
  
Bought it ... .. 1  
Gift from (give source) ... .. 2  
Provided by H.Q. of own organisation. 3  
Loan from Local Authority ... .. 4  
Other sources (specify source) ... 5  
... ..

If bought:  
  
i) Who provided the money? If more than one source, give details.

37. Do you have any difficulty in getting transport facilities to maintain your present service?  
  
No difficulties ... .. 0  
Some " ... .. Y  
  
If any difficulties, give details:-

Y	X	0
1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

38. Are there any improvements or changes you would like to make with regard to transport, and if so, what stops you doing this?

No improvements ... 0

Improvement  
or Change

What stops you

39. With your present transport facilities, could you serve more recipients, or operate on more days?

Could not extend service ... 0

" serve ... more recipients

" operate on ... more days

40. If you were called upon to double the number of meals served, what additional transport would you need and from which source would you try to get it?

No additional transport needed ... 0

Private cars from members ... 1

Vans from: (state source) ... 2

... ..

#### SECTION VII - ADMINISTRATION

41. What do you estimate is the cost to you of maintenance (including garaging and insurance) of vehicles for the past year?

No maintenance (private cars,  
L.A. vans etc.) ... 0

Maintenance estimated at £... per year.

42. What do you estimate is the yearly cost of expenses other than those already specified in running your service?

Include cost of briquettes, etc.  
replacement of equipment, cleaning  
materials, overalls and laundering,  
etc.

£

43. Do you get a grant for Meals on Wheels from the Local Authority?

Yes ... Y

No ... 0

If No:

i) Have you applied for one?

Applied ... X

Not applied ... A

If applied: What reason did the L.A. give for not giving you a grant?

If not applied, why not?

If Yes,

a) Did you get a capital sum?

Yes ... Y

No ... X

How much? £

What was it to be used for?

b) Do you get an annual allowance?

Yes ... A

No ... 0

How much was it last year? £

44. From what (other) sources is money obtained?

45. Have there been any big changes made in the last 6 months in connection with the service, e.g. number of meals/persons served, cooking, transport, etc.

Yes ... Y

No ... X

If Yes, give details:

46. In conclusion, are there any other changes or improvements you would like to make, or comments on the service?

CONTINUATION

Qn: No.:-

CONTINUATION

Qn: No.:-



Interviewer

Serial No.

Date of Interview / / 58

If no interview give reason

Day of Interview day

Area

Time of starting interview

SUGGESTED INTRODUCTION

I'm Mrs. .... of the Social Survey. We are carrying out an inquiry on behalf of the National Corporation for the Care of Old People into the "Meals-on-Wheels" service. The people who bring you the meals know about it. You don't have to answer any of the questions, but we would be grateful if you could give us some information about your own circumstances, and what you think of the meals, so that we could get an idea of who else might benefit from having them.

Any information you give us, or comments, will be treated in strict confidence.

1. Are you getting a cooked dinner delivered by the "meals-on-wheels"? .....

Yes ... Y - GO ON TO Q.2

No ... X

IF NO (X)

- (a) Did you ever have them? Yes ... 1  
No ... 2

If NO (2), conclude interview

If YES (1),

- (i) For how long did you have meals delivered? .... yrs. mths.

- (ii) Why did you have them?

Y	X	0	1
2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9

- (iii) How long ago did you stop getting them?

mths.

- (iv) Why did you stop getting them?

Y	X	0	1
2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9

Conclude interview

2. For how long have you been getting these meals? yrs mths wks.

3. What sort of cooker have you got?  
(available for use, even if never used)

PROMPT Gas/electric cooker (with oven) ... 1  
and Coal or coke range (with oven) ... 2  
CODE Gas rings/burners (no oven).. ... 3  
ALL Electric rings/hot plate (no oven). 4  
THAT Other (specify)  
APPLY ... 5

4. Where is it?

Own kitchen ... .. 6  
Shared kitchen ... .. 7  
Living room ... .. 8  
Landing, hall, passage ... .. 9

5. Apart from times when the weather is very bad, are you able to get as far as the shops in winter?

Yes ... .. Y - GO ON TO Q.7

No, permanently bedridden X

No, but not permanently  
bedridden ... .. 0

- (a) What stops you?

Y	X	0	1
2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9

IF NO, PERMANENTLY BEDRIDDEN (X) - Go on to Qn.9.

IF NO, NOT PERMANENTLY BEDRIDDEN (0) - Ask 6

6. If you could get someone to do your shopping, could you cook for yourself?

Could cook ... Y  
Could not cook ... X

IF COULD COOK (Y)

- (a) Would you prefer this to getting meals-on-wheels? Yes ... 1  
No ... 2

IF NO (2)

- (i) Why not?

Y	X	0	1
2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9

IF COULD NOT COOK (X)

- (b) Is this because of (reason given in 5a) or are there other reasons as well?

Only reason in 5(a) ... .. 3  
Other reason (specify) ... .. 4

GO ON TO QN.9.

IF ABLE TO GET OUT (Code Y to Q.5)

7. Why do you need to have a cooked dinner delivered?

Y	X	0	1
2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9

8. If there were a club for older people near here, which you could get to easily, where you could get a dinner for the same price as meals-on-wheels, would you sooner go there than have dinners delivered?

Prefer club ... .. Y  
Prefer meals-on-wheels ... .. X

If Prefer M-O-W (X)

- (a) Why?

Y	X	0	1
2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9

TO ALL - Now ABOUT THE DINNERS YOU GET

9. What days do they deliver dinners to you?
- |       |                |   |
|-------|----------------|---|
|       | Monday .....   | 1 |
|       | Tuesday .....  | 2 |
| CODE  | Wednesday .... | 3 |
| ALL   | Thursday ..... | 4 |
| THAT  | Friday .....   | 5 |
| APPLY | Saturday ..... | 6 |
|       | Sunday .....   | 7 |
10. Do you get one dinner on each of these days, or do you get two dinners so that you can save on for the next day?
- |  |                      |    |
|--|----------------------|----|
|  | One dinner only .... | Y  |
|  | Two dinners .....    | X  |
|  | Yes                  | No |
11. Do you get enough (for each dinner if 2 delivered)
- |          |   |   |
|----------|---|---|
| Meat     | 1 | 2 |
| Potatoes | 3 | 4 |
| Greens   | 5 | 6 |
- /If meals from 2 different sources, record for most usual source & give any comments about the other./
12. Do you usually make one dinner last for 2 days or 2 meals?
- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Yes ... | 0 |
| No ...  | 1 |
- /If part saved, e.g. sweet, veg. only, code "No"./
- IF YES (0)
- (a) Do you find you still have enough for each dinner when you do this?
- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Yes ... | 2 |
| No ...  | 3 |
13. What time is the dinner delivered?
14. Is this the best time for you, or would you like to get it earlier or later?
- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Best time .....    | 0 |
| Prefer earlier ... | 1 |
| Prefer later ..... | 2 |
15. When you get it, is it hot enough to eat without warming?
- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Yes ... | 4 |
| No ...  | 5 |
- (Record spontaneous comments)
16. How long after the meal comes do you generally eat it?
- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Straight away .....            | Y |
| Straight away after warming .. | 0 |
- EAT                      minutes later.
17. On the whole, do you think the meals are well cooked?
- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Yes ... | 0 |
| No ...  | 9 |

18. Would you prefer to have soup instead of pudding (sweet, afters)?
- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| D.N.A. (have soup ... | Y |
| Prefer soup .....     | X |
| No .....              | 0 |
19. If they could bring meals on more days, would you take them?
- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Yes ... | A |
| No ...  | 0 |
- If YES (A)
- (a) On what other days would you like to have them?
- |               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Monday .....  | 1 |
| Tuesday ..... | 2 |
| Wednesday ... | 3 |
| Thursday .... | 4 |
| Friday .....  | 5 |
| Saturday .... | 6 |
| Sunday .....  | 7 |
- If NO (0)
- (b) Why not?
- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| Y | X | 0 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
- Ensure at this stage that informant realises that these questions are being asked to help us to find out what suits people best, but it may not be possible to give everybody exactly what they would like.
20. How much do you pay for your dinner?
- |    |    |
|----|----|
| s. | d. |
|----|----|
- (meal-on-wheel)
21. How do you manage about dinners on
- (a) SUNDAY
- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| Y | X | 0 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
- (b) Other days when you don't get a meal-on-wheel?
- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| Y | X | 0 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
- (c) Do you manage to get one good (cooked) meal every day? (record comments)
- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| Y | X | 0 | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |

22. a) Can you tell me what you had to eat yesterday?

b) When - (approx. time)?

c) Who prepared or cooked it, or brought it in?

) REPEAT FOR DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY  
) (NAME DAY)

YESTERDAY		(a) FOOD EATEN (full details)	(b) Time	(c) Self	Prepared/cooked here by Others (specify)	Brought in ready to eat (specify whom)	Meal out (state where)
P R O M P T	Breakfast			1			
	Mid-m'g Snack			1			
	DINNER			1			
	Afternoon Snack			1			
	TEA			1			
	SUPPER			1			
IF FRESH FRUIT or TOMATOES not mentioned, ask "Did you have any fresh fruit Yes... Y or tomatoes yesterday? No ... X							

DAY BEFORE		(a) FOOD EATEN (full details)	(b) Time	(c) Self	Prepared/cooked here by others (specify)	Brought in by	Meal out (where)
P R O M P T	Breakfast			1			
	Mid-m'g snack			1			
	DINNER			1			
	Afternoon Snack			1			
	TEA			1			
	SUPPER			1			
IF FRESH FRUIT or TOMATOES not mentioned, ask "Did you have any fresh fruit Yes... 1 or tomatoes on day? No ... 2							

23. Can you tell me something about the people who call on you?

(a) Have you had a visit in the last month from:

Then ask (b) & (c) where applicable

Ask (d) to all

	(a) Visit in last month		(b) If YES- within last week?		(c) If within last week, prompt for each of last 7 days, starting with yesterday & working back D.K.							
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Mon.	Tues.	Weds.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	days
Home Help	A	Y	B	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Doctor	A	X	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
District Nurse	A	0	B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Churches or religious bodies	A	1	B	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Groups of relatives (specify)												
1.	A	2	B	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
2.	A	3	B	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3.	A	4	B	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Neighbours or friends	A	5	B	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
(d) Anyone else in the last					6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
week who stayed a little					7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
while? (specify who)					8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8



HOUSEHOLD CLASSIFICATION

(i) HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

	Relationship to Subject	Sex		Working			Age
		M	F	F	P	N	
A	SUBJECT	1	2	3	4	5	
B		1	2	3	4	5	
C		1	2	3	4	5	
D		1	2	3	4	5	
E		1	2	3	4	5	
F		1	2	3	4	5	
G		1	2	3	4	5	

- (iii) Marital status of Subject
- Single ..... 1
- Married ..... 2
- Widowed, divorced, separated .. 3

(iv) Occupation & Industry

Give full details of subject's present/last job - (if married woman or widowed, give husband's present/last job) unless lighter or less skilled work taken up on retirement, in which case give details of job at retirement.

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Industry \_\_\_\_\_

(ii) INCOME OF SUBJECT - If living with Spouse, give joint income and code:-

Single income .... Y

Joint income .... X

SOURCE		per week	
1. Wages/salary ... ..	£ _____ s.		
2. Retirement/O.A.P. ... ..	_____		
3. National Assistance ... ..	_____		
4. Other Gvt. grants/pensions...	_____		
5. Private/firm's pensions ... ..	_____		
6. Other income (specify)			

- (v) No. of rooms (excluding kitchen unless used to eat in) ... ..

- (vi) Is accommodation:-
- Owned ... .. 1
- Rented furnished ... .. 2
- Rented unfurnished ... .. 3
- Rent free ... .. 4

- (vii) How long have you lived here? \_\_\_\_\_ yrs.
- If less than 10 years
- (a) Did you live round about here before that, (say within 15 mins.)?
- Yes .... Y
- No .... X

(viii) IF SUBJECT HAS BEEN/IS MARRIED

- Have you any children not living in this household? Yes .... Y
- If Yes, get details No .... 0

	SEX		AGE	Married? Yes W'd No	How long would it take them to get here from where they live?				How often does he/she visit you?			
	M	F			Up to 15 mins	Over 15 mins to 1 hour	Over 1 hour	Abroad	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less than once a month	Never
A	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
B	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
C	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
D	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
E	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
F	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
G	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
H	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4

- (ix) Does anyone else in this household get meals-on-wheels? .... Yes .... 1
- No .... 2

If YES (1)

(a) Who? (Relationship to subject) \_\_\_\_\_

IF THIS PERSON IS NOT IN YOUR SAMPLE, DO NOT INTERVIEW: IF THEY ARE IN THE SAMPLE, INTERVIEW, but OMIT QUESTIONS WHICH APPLY JOINTLY: (see instructions)

- (x) Time interview completed/ended \_\_\_\_\_ (If incomplete note last qn. answered, and give) ( reason for ending. )

Interviewer

Serial No.

Date of Interview / / 58

Day of Interview day

If no interview give reason

Area

Time of starting interview

SUGGESTED INTRODUCTION

I'm Mrs. of the Social Survey. We are carrying out an inquiry on behalf of the National Corporation For the Care of Old People to see how older people manage about getting hot meals, and what they would do if they couldn't cook for themselves.

You don't have to answer any of the questions, but we would be grateful if you could give us some information about your own circumstances. Any information you give us, or comments, will be treated in strict confidence.

1. Are you getting a cooked dinner delivered by the "Meals-on-Wheels"?

Yes .... Y  
No .... X

IF YES (Y) CLOSE INTERVIEW

IF NO (X), (a) Did you ever have them?

Yes .... 1  
No .... 2

IF DID HAVE, (1)

(i) For how long did you have meals delivered?

yrs. mths.

(ii) Why did you have them?

Y	X	0	1
2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9

(iii) How long ago did you stop getting them ... mths.

(iv) Why did you stop?

Y	X	0	1
2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9

3. What sort of cooker have you got?

(available for use, even if never used)

PROMPT Gas/electric cooker (with oven) ... 1  
and Coal or coke range (with oven) ... 2  
CODE Gas rings/burners (no oven)... ... 3  
ALL Electric rings/hotplates (no oven).. 4  
THAT Other (specify)... ... 5  
APPLY

4. Where is it?

Own kitchen ... 6  
Shared kitchen ... 7  
Living room ... 8  
Landing ... 9

5. Apart from times when the weather is very bad, are you able to get as far as the shops in winter?

Yes... .. Y  
No, permanently bedridden ... X  
No but not permanently bedridden ... 0

↓  
(a) What stops you?

			1
2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9

6. Who does most of the shopping (for this household)?

Self ... 1  
Other member of household ... 2  
Not member of household ... 3

If Self (1): (a) If you couldn't do it, could you get someone else to do it?

Yes .... 4  
No .... 5  
DK, Doubtful .... 6

If not self (2,3): (b) If they couldn't do it, could you get someone else to do it or do it yourself?

Yes .... 7  
No .... 8  
DK, Doubtful .... 9

7. Do you have at least one good cooked meal a day?

Yes .... Y  
No .... X

IF NO (X)

(a) Why not?

Y	X	0	1
2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9

8. Who does most of the cooking for this household? .....

9. If .....(person mentioned in Qn.8) could not cook for you(rself), how would you manage about a hot dinner?

(a) Sundays

Y	X	0	1
2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9

(b) The rest of the week?

Y	X	0	1
2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9

OMIT A and Qn.10 where informant has previously had meals-on-wheels /Yes to Qn.1(a)/

A. EXPLAIN -

In some areas there is a service through which older people who can't cook for themselves, or get anyone else to cook for them, can get a hot meal delivered for about 1/- or 1/3d. This is the "Meals-on-Wheels" service.

10. Have you ever heard of this service?

Yes .... Y  
No .... X

If NO (X)

a) What do you think of this idea?

Y	X	0
1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

IF YES (Y) <-----

b) Is there one in this district/town?

Yes, there is one ... .. 1  
No, there is not one ... .. 2  
Don't know ... .. 3

c) Do you know anyone personally who has had these meals?

Yes ..... 4  
No ..... 5

If knows anyone (4)

(i) What did they think of the scheme?

Y	X	0
1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

B. EXPLAIN - In some areas there are luncheon clubs where older people who can't get a hot meal at home, but who can get out of doors, can have a hot meal for about 1/- or 1/3d.

11. What do you think of this idea?

Y	X	0
1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

C. EXPLAIN - In some areas there is a voucher scheme, where older people can pay about 1/- or 1/3d. for a voucher, and can get a meal at a restaurant or cafe.

12. What do you think of this idea?

Y	X	0
1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

13. Supposing it were not possible to get a hot meal at home, and you couldn't go out, would you like to get meals-on-wheels?

Y	X	0
1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9

14. Supposing you couldn't get a hot meal at home, and you could get out, would you go to

a) Lunch club for older people? (If there were one near here)

Yes .... Y  
No .... 0  
Doubtful, D.K .... X

If No or Doubtful (0,X)

(i) Why not?

b) Restaurant/cafe using voucher scheme?

Yes .... 7  
No .... 8  
Doubtful, D.K .... 9

If No or Doubtful (8,9)

(ii) Why not?

THERE ARE NO QUESTIONS 15-21.



22. a) Can you tell me what you had to eat yesterday?  
b) When - (approx. time)?  
c) Who prepared or cooked it, or brought it in?
- )  
) REPEAT FOR DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY  
) (NAME DAY)

	YESTERDAY	(a) FOOD EATEN (full details)	(b) Time	(c) Self	Prepared/cooked here by Others (specify)	Brought in ready to eat (specify whom)	Meal out (state where)		
P R O M P T	Breakfast			1					
	Mid-m'g. Snack			1					
	DINNER			1					
	Afternoon Snack			1					
	TEA			1					
	SUPPER			1					
IF FRESH FRUIT or TOMATOES not mentioned, ask "Did you have any fresh fruit Yes ... Y or tomatoes yesterday?" No ... X									

	DAY BEFORE	(a) FOOD EATEN (full details)	(b) Time	(c) Self	Prepared/cooked here by others (specify)	Brought in by	Meal out (where)		
P R O M P T	Breakfast			1					
	Mid-m'g. snack			1					
	DINNER			1					
	Afternoon snack			1					
	TEA			1					
	SUPPER			1					
IF FRESH FRUIT or TOMATOES not mentioned, ask "Did you have any fresh fruit Yes ... 1 or tomatoes on ____ day?" No ... 2									

23. Can you tell me something about the people who call on you?  
(a) Have you had a visit in the last month from:
- Then ask (b) & (c) where applicable  
Ask (d) to all

P R O M P T		(a) Visit in last month		(b) If YES- within last week?		(c) If within last week, prompt for each of last 7 days, starting with yesterday & working back D.K. Mon. Tues. Weds. Thurs. Fri. Sat. Sun. days							
		Yes	No	Yes	No								
	Home Help	A	Y	B	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
	Doctor	A	X	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	District Nurse	A	0	B	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Churches or religious bodies	A	1	B	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Groups of relatives (specify)												
	1.	A	2	B	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	2.	A	3	B	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	3.	A	4	B	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Neighbours or friends	A	5	B	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	(d) Anyone else in the last week who stayed a little while? (specify who)					6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
					7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	
					8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	

HOUSEHOLD CLASSIFICATION

(i) HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

	Relationship to Subject	Sex		Working			Age
		M	F	F	P	N	
A	SUBJECT	1	2	3	4	5	
B		1	2	3	4	5	
C		1	2	3	4	5	
D		1	2	3	4	5	
E		1	2	3	4	5	
F		1	2	3	4	5	
G		1	2	3	4	5	

(ii) INCOME OF SUBJECT - If living with Spouse, give joint income and code:-  
Single income .... Y  
Joint income .... X

SOURCE	per week
1. Wages/salary ... ..	£ ..... s.
2. Retirement/O.A.P. ... ..	.....
3. National Assistance ... ..	.....
4. Other Gvt. grants/pensions...	.....
5. Private/firm's pensions ... ..	.....
6. Other income (specify)	.....

(iii) Marital status of Subject  
Single ..... 1  
Married ..... 2  
Widowed, divorced, seperated .... 3

(iv) Occupation & Industry  
Give full details of subject's present/last job - (if married woman or widowed, give husband's present/last job) unless lighter or less skilled work taken up on retirement, in which case give details of job at retirement.

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Industry \_\_\_\_\_

(v) No. of rooms (excluding kitchen unless used to eat in) ... ..

(vi) Is accommodation:-  
Owned ... .. 1  
Rented furnished ... .. 2  
Rented unfurnished ... .. 3  
Rent free ... .. 4

(vii) How long have you lived here? \_\_\_\_\_ yrs.

If less than 10 years

(a) Did you live round about here before that, (say within 15 mins.)?

Yes .... Y  
No .... X

(viii) IF SUBJECT HAS BEEN/IS MARRIED

Have you any children not living in this household? Yes .... Y  
If Yes, get details No .... 0

	SEX		AGE	Married? Yes W'd No	How long would it take them to get here from where they live?				How often does he/she visit you?			
	M	F			Up to 15 mins	Over 15 mins to 1 hour	Over 1 hour	Abroad	At least once a week	At least once a month	Less than once a month	Never
A	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
B	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
C	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
D	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
E	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
F	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
G	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4
H	Y	X		1 2 3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4

INTERVIEW ALL MEN 65 & over & ALL WOMEN 60 & over in household, but OMIT QUESTIONS WHICH APPLY JOINTLY: (see instructions)

(x) Time interview completed/ended \_\_\_\_\_ . (If incomplete, note last qn. answered, and give reason)  
( for ending. )



## A P P E N D I X    B

### "MEALS-ON-WHEELS" SERVICES

#### The Sample

For this survey two samples were required, namely -

- 1) a sample of individual persons already receiving meals from one of the 'Meals-on-Wheels' schemes, and
- 2) a general population sample of males aged 65 years and over and of females aged 60 years and over.

The sample was to cover England, Wales and Scotland.

#### Sample of Recipients

This was a two-stage design with areas, in which 'Meals-on-Wheels' schemes were operating, as the first-stage units. Returns were obtained from the organisations operating such schemes giving the areas and the number of persons in each area in receipt of meals. In some areas, the number of recipients was too small to warrant it being included as a first-stage unit on its own, and in such cases areas were combined to form units of 25 or more recipients. Forty units were then selected with probability proportional to the number of recipients.

For each selected first stage unit a list of recipients was obtained and 25 selected in each with equal probability. In a few areas it was found that there were less than 25 names on the list; the total sample drawn was 964 recipients.

The selected areas were as follows:-

#### Sampling Areas - England and Wales

South Shields C.B.	Deptford Met. B.	Bath, C.B.	Herne Bay U.D.
Middlesbrough C.B.	St. Marylebone Met. B.	Cardiff C.B.	Caterham U.D.
Dewsbury C.B.	Wandsworth Met. B.	Dawley U.D.	Hastings C.B.
Hull C.B.	Hendon M.B.	Walsall C.B.	Worthing R.D. (East)
Blackwell R.D. & Crich	Sunbury-on-Thames	Leek & Uttoxeter U.D.'s	Norwich C.B.
Grimsby C.B.	Coulsdon & Purley U.D.	Kidderminster M.B.	Lambeth Met. B.
Nottingham C.B.	Bourne End & Marlow	Crewe M.B.	Croydon C.B.
Bedford M.B.	Aldershot, Lymington,	Bury C.B.	Exeter C.B.
Gt. Yarmouth C.B.	Winchester	Salford C.B.	City of Westminster
		Darwen M.B.	Coventry C.B.

#### Sampling Areas - Scotland

Kelty	Edinburgh	Glasgow
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#### Sample of "Older" General Population

It was not possible to obtain directly a sample of men and women in the required age group, i.e. men aged 65 years and over and women aged 60 years and over. From the figures quoted in the 1 per cent sample tables of the 1951 Census, it was estimated that the distribution of this group was approximately one to every three households. A sample of 4,000 addresses was therefore drawn from the Electoral Rolls.

The sample design was a stratified random one in two stages. In England and Wales wards or groups of contiguous parishes were selected as the first stage units and in Scotland, wards, burghs or district council areas. These units were stratified initially by Standard Region thereby classifying them into eleven geographical groups. Within region, they were then stratified by urban and rural; i.e. those units contained within urban administrative areas and those in rural administrative areas. The urban units were further stratified into those falling within the administrative areas included in the seven major conurbations, and those other urban areas outside the conurbations. In England and Wales these units were then stratified by the Juror-index, devised as an indicator of the comparative economic status of different areas. The rural units were stratified by Standard Region only.

In Scotland, one of the Standard Regions, units were classified into four divisions, namely - Northern, East Central, West Central and Southern before further stratification. As no Juror-index exists for Scotland, rateable value per elector was used instead.

Forty first-stage units were then selected with probability proportional to the 1955 parliamentary electorate. This gave a distribution of 30 urban and 6 rural units in England and Wales and 3 urban and 1 rural in Scotland.



The second stage of sampling consisted of the selection of addresses from the Electoral Register, 100 being selected in each of the forty first-stage units. All persons at an address who were within the stated age groups (i.e. women 60 and over and men 65 and over) were to be included in the sample. This yielded a total sample of 1,632 older persons.

The selected areas were as follows:-

Sampling Areas - England & Wales

Newcastle-upon-Tyne C.B.	Hale U.D.	Bethnal Green Met.B.	Sidmouth U.D.
Carlisle C.B.	Warrington C.B.	Acton M.B.	Paignton U.D.
Tynemouth C.B.	Leicester C.B.	Hackney Met. B.	Llanelly M.B.
Blyth M.B.	Beeston & Stapleford U.D.	Barking M.B.	Wharfedale R.D.
Mexborough U.D.	Birmingham C.B.	Heston & Isleworth M.B.	Worksop R.D.
Sheffield C.B.	Birmingham C.B.	Bexley M.B.	Rochford R.D.
Sheffield C.B.	Stoke-on-Trent C.B.	Croydon C.B.	Chanctonbury R.D.
Manchester C.B.	Watford M.B.	Northfleet U.D.	Tavistock R.D.
Stockport C.B.	Bedford M.B.	Fleet U.D.	Holywell R.D.

Sampling Areas - Scotland

Airdrie Burgh	Johnstone Burgh	Edinburgh	Dunbar D.C.
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Interviews Completed

Recipients sample

Of the 964 people selected for recipients' sample, 853 (89%) completed the full interview. The reasons for interviews not being obtained from the other 111 people were as follow:-

Not receiving meals-on-wheels	...	...	...	...	...	...	69
Meals given up	...	...	...	...	...	...	34
Dead	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
In hospital	...	...	...	...	...	...	21
House empty/demolished/informant moved	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
Too ill to interview	...	...	...	...	...	...	12
Away (with relatives/on holiday)	...	...	...	...	...	...	7
Refused to be interviewed	...	...	...	...	...	...	14
Interview started but not completed	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
							<u>111</u>

Thus 95% of those eligible for inclusion in the sample completed the interview.

Older peoples' sample

Of the 1,632 older people, 1,317 (82%) completed the full interview. The reasons for interviews not being obtained are as follows:-

Receiving meals-on-wheels	...	...	...	...	...	...	11
In hospital, institution	...	...	...	...	...	...	12
Away with relatives, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	...	41
Too ill to interview	...	...	...	...	...	...	47
Not at home, unable to contact	...	...	...	...	...	...	42
Refused to be interviewed	...	...	...	...	...	...	161
Interview started, not completed	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
							<u>315</u>















